POEMS BY A DRANGAN BOY

Poems and Writings of the Fenian and Land League Hero

Thomas Ryan

1848 - 1924

Compiled and Edited by TJ Keane

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First Published December 2024

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Designed and Printed by:
Fitzpatrick Printers,
7 Davis Street, Tipperary Town
Tel: 062-51113

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Part One

(By TJ Keane)

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to the National Folklore Collection, UCD, for permission to use material from The Schools' Collection.

The Schools Collection is treasure-trove of folklore and local tradition that was compiled by pupils from 5,000 primary schools in the Irish Free State between 1937 and 1939. One of these contributors to this vast collection was Clochar na Trócaire, Drangan (Convent of Mercy, Drangan). Among the bright young minds at this school, a girl named Teresa Walshe emerged as a significant figure for her diligence in documenting the poems of local poet Thomas Ryan. Under the guidance of Sr. M. Gráinne, Teresa dedicated countless hours to transcribing Ryan's work, ensuring that the lyrical beauty and cultural significance of his poems were preserved for future generations. Without Teresa's commitment and careful handwriting, much of Thomas Ryan's literary legacy might have faded into obscurity, lost to the passage of time.

Thanks also the UCD Digital Library for permission to use information from 'The Shan Van Vocht.' The Shan Van Vocht, a national monthly magazine founded in 1896 by Belfast women Alice Milligan and Anna Johnston, served as a significant platform for Irish literature, culture, and political thought during its brief yet impactful existence. The magazine featured a diverse array of content, including literature, poetry, historical articles, and political commentary, reflecting the dynamic cultural landscape of the time. Its pages showcased works in both Irish and English, fostering a sense of national identity and pride through the inclusion of renowned contributors such as James Connolly, Douglas Hyde, and Arthur Griffith, alongside the local voice of Dranagn man, Thomas Ryan, who penned poems and stories under the pseudonym A Drangan Boy. Despite its cessation in 1899, when its subscription lists were transferred to Griffith's United Irishman, the Shan Van Vocht remains a testament to the rich tapestry of Irish heritage.

Introduction

‘A hero is born among a hundred, a wise man is found among a thousand, but an accomplished one might not be found even among a hundred thousand men.’ These profound words by Plato remind us of the rarity of true greatness and the multifaceted nature of significant individuals. As we commemorate the centenary of Thomas Ryan in 2024, we are called to reflect not only on his accomplishments but also on the values he embodied in his life as 'A Drangan Boy.' In a world that often overlooks its past heroes, it is crucial for us to remember and honour those who have shaped our community and laid the foundations for future generations.

Regrettably, many young members of our parish may not be familiar with Thomas Ryan, a man whose impact resonates deeply within the fabric of Drangan's history. While he is often remembered for his lyrical prowess and evocative writings, Ryan was far more than a poet; he was a Fenian fighter, a Land League activist, a historian, a teacher, a loving husband, and a creamery manager. His legacy serves as a profound reminder of the power of living a simple life dedicated to the service of others. Through his poetry, he wielded the pen as a sword, urging his fellow countrymen to rise against the bonds of landlordism and British rule, and to awaken their sense of duty towards the freedom of Ireland.

Moreover, Thomas Ryan epitomises the essence of what it means to be a true hero—not just through bold actions in the heat of battle, but through the quiet determination of a man willing to inspire others toward collective action and change. His life's work offers lessons in courage, resilience, and compassion, encouraging us to fight not just for our own freedoms, but for the rights and dignity of all people. As we celebrate Thomas Ryan's centenary, it’s my hope that this book will let us ensure that his remarkable story and contributions do not fade into obscurity. Instead, may they serve as a beacon of hope, motivating us to honour his legacy by engaging in our communities and advocating for justice and equality, much like he did with every verse he crafted and every life he touched.

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS RYAN "A DRANGAN BOY".

(By TJ Keane)

March 1848 was a grim chapter for the village of Drangan, as the community grappled with the relentless horrors of famine, only to be plunged further into despair by a devastating cholera outbreak. The air was thick with despair, and the cries of the suffering echoed through the hills. Yet, amidst this backdrop of tragedy and loss, a glimmer of hope emerged in the form of love. In the humble village church, constructed by Fr. Fox in 1806, Michael Ryan from the townland of Curraheen was set to marry Catherine Croke, hailing from the nearby Rathkenny. Like many couples of their time, the newlyweds would sub-let a small plot of land from Michael's father, a tenant of the affluent landowner William Armstrong, who possessed over 2,000 acres across counties Tipperary, Waterford, and Limerick. The looming shadow of their socio-economic struggles was inescapable, yet the bond of marriage symbolised a flicker of resilience in the face of overwhelming adversity.

Their home, perched on a hill and providing a panoramic view of the tumultuous village below, was a bittersweet refuge. From this vantage point, the couple could gaze upon the majestic Slievenamon mountain, which harboured the promise of hope and gathering storm of change. That very July, over 50,000 people would ascend its slopes to hear the impassioned words of Young Ireland leaders, Thomas Francis Meagher, and Michael Doheny, as they spoke of revolution and renewal. The mountain's timeless beauty stood as a silent witness to the villagers' suffering, yet served as a reminder that beyond the turmoil lay possibilities for a brighter future. It was here, within this picturesque yet sombre landscape, that dreams often took flight.

In August of 1849, Michael and Catherine welcomed their first child, a boy named Thomas, into a world laden with hardship. This birth offered a much-needed beacon of joy amidst the shadows of despair, as the couple, like many in their community, endeavoured to navigate through the dark times. From his earliest days, they recognised a unique intelligence spark within young Thomas, nurturing aspirations for his education. However, a journey lay ahead; the nearest school was an old, thatched building near the bridge in Priestown, nearly an hour's walk for little Thomas. There, under the guidance of the teacher William Quirke, he would delve into the realms of Irish, English, Latin, and Greek, as well as immerse himself in Irish history and folklore. This foundation, conceived in hope, would later manifest in Thomas's own words, with him penning a heartfelt poem titled "The Old House in the Glen (The School Near Slievenamon)," where he recalls the joy and camaraderie shared with friends "Johnny, James, and Mary Anne," beside the "crystal stream." It is undeniable that William Quirke left an indelible mark on young Thomas's evolving mind, equipping him with the intellectual tools necessary to navigate the complexities of life, and perhaps, to envision a future that transcended the darkness enveloping Drangan at that time.

Thomas's formal education would end around the age of 12, yet his insatiable thirst for knowledge would be a constant companion throughout his life. Growing up in a rural setting, he toiled alongside his father and grandfather on their modest plots of land, experiencing first-hand the hardships and joys of rural life. Many evenings, Thomas would gather with the

older people of the community and be immersed in tales of Ireland's rich folklore and legends, with a particular fascination for the stories that echoed from the slopes of his cherished Slievenamon. These narratives were not mere entertainment; they were imbued with the spirit of a nation grappling with its identity, and they instilled in Thomas a profound understanding of the societal struggles surrounding him.

From these gatherings, Thomas also absorbed discussions about the political climate and the ongoing struggles of Ireland. The Young Irelanders' rebellion of 1848 resonated deeply with him, as it happened only the year before his own birth year. The memory of the Irish tricolour being flown for the first time in battle at Ballingarry became a significant moment in his consciousness. Though the rebellion itself might have been viewed as a futile endeavour, it represented something greater—a defiance against death, famine, despair, and the looming spectre of emigration that haunted his community. The political reverberations of this uprising were both complex and enduring. While some impacts matured slowly over time, others unfolded with remarkable urgency, rekindling the bonds of republicanism that echoed the legacy of the United Irishmen. Key figures like James Fintan Lalor and John Mitchel pushed the conversation around landownership into the political arena, a matter that Thomas would later champion with great fervour.

Among those whose legacy was entwined with the 1848 rebellion was Charles J. Kickham, the celebrated poet, novelist, and patriot from Mullinahone. Kickham's contributions to the Irish literary and political landscape inspired many, including Thomas, who would draw upon both the literary and revolutionary spirit that defined his young years. Thomas Ryan's admiration for Kickham would inspire him to pen the poem "Kickham's Grave," when Kickham died in 1882.

He would also have heard of The United Irishmen's uprising of 1798 and how this was a significant chapter in Ireland's storied past, with notable events unfolding across various regions, including the low hills of Slievenamon, particularly at a site known as Carrigmoclear. This uprising was not merely a rebellion against British rule; it represented the aspirations of many Irish people who yearned for independence and reform. Thomas would reference 1798 in many of his poems such as "Before the Battle Time '98," "Remember Mary Purcell," and "Norton of Mullinahone."

However, the English response to the uprising was brutal and unforgiving, culminating in a series of harsh measures that would irrevocably alter the political landscape of Ireland. In the aftermath, the Act of Union was passed in 1800, uniting Ireland with Great Britain and creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland on January 1, 1801. This union was not just a political manoeuvre; it marked the end of the Irish Parliament and transformed the governance of Ireland, with significant long-term implications.

One of the most profound consequences of the Act of Union was the decline of the Ascendancy, a privileged class of landowners and gentry who had dominated Irish society. In its place arose a troubling phenomenon: the rise of absentee landlords. Approximately 10,000 landlords, who were more concerned with their fortunes in England than the welfare of their Irish estates, became prominent figures in this new landscape. Residing primarily in London and rarely visiting their land, these landlords viewed their properties merely as sources of income, devoid of any connection to the communities they governed. They often relied on local middlemen or agents to manage their estates, leading to a fractious relationship with tenants. These middlemen quickly gained a notorious reputation for being ruthless, wielding

considerable power and often employing harsh tactics to deal with rent arrears and evictions. This dynamic not only exacerbated social tensions in Ireland but also contributed to a growing resentment towards both the absentee landlords and the British government that facilitated such exploitation.

Thomas's journey into the world of ideas and activism was inevitable, fuelled by the stories and the struggles that interwove his early life with the broader narrative of Irish history.

As the political landscape shifted, a new nationalist movement began to take root in Ireland during Thomas's teenage years—the Fenians. Central to this movement was the Irish Republican Brotherhood, established in 1858 by James Stephens and John O'Mahoney, both of whom were veterans of the earlier Young Ireland movement. With the assistance of charismatic recruiters like Stephens, the Fenians were able to galvanise substantial support among the urban working class and rural poor, recruiting as many as 50,000 men by 1867. Among these supporters were Thomas and his lifelong friend Michael Cusack. Michael was two years older than Thomas but from an early age these two Drangan men would form a friendship that would last a lifetime, and their influence on the little parish would echo through generations. Their friendship deepened as they trained together for the Fenian cause under the tutelage of Sergeant McCarthy, a decorated veteran of the British army known for his bravery during the Indian Mutiny.

Under the shadows of Slievenamon, Thomas and Michael, alongside their peers, engaged in military drills and preparations for a rebellion. This transformative period ignited Thomas's creative spirit, inspiring him to pen poems that reflected the fervour and intensity of their training, such as "The Moonlight Drill" and "The Fenian Scout." However, the Fenians' aspirations for an armed uprising in 1867 were thwarted by early arrests of key leaders, leading to a rebellion that, despite mobilising thousands, resulted in minimal casualties and widespread imprisonment of its participants, including Sergeant McCarthy. McCarthy would die in 1878 in the arms of Land League founder Michael Davitt and in the presence of Charles Stewart Parnell and John Dillon.

In the aftermath of the rebellion's failure, Michael Cusack found himself seeking refuge in America, where he became a vital figure in the fundraising efforts for the Irish nationalist cause. His involvement in these activities speaks to the fervent desire for Irish independence that pulsed through the expatriate communities abroad. Notably, Eva Ó Cathaoir discusses in her book, "Soldiers of Liberty," that Cusack was likely connected with O'Donovan Rossa's dynamite school in New York, where ambitious plans for armed resistance against British rule were hatched. James O'Shea in his book, "Priests, Politics and Society in Post-famine Ireland" also references this. Additionally, there are accounts suggesting he participated in smuggling arms on his return to Drangan. Indeed, Cusack's Fenian connections ran deep, as exemplified by his honoured role as a pallbearer alongside fellow nationalist Charles Kickham at the funeral of John O'Mahony in March 1877.

In contrast to Cusack's adventurous undertakings, Thomas Ryan chose a more grounded path, remaining in Drangan to tend to the family farm. While Michael exchanged his pike for the perilous endeavours of revolutionary activities abroad, Thomas opted for a peaceful existence rooted in the fields of home. Yet, rather than completely stepping away from the struggle, Thomas symbolically transformed his pike into a pen, signifying a shift in approach—one of advocacy through written word and local efforts. This juxtaposition of their choices highlights the diverse ways in which individuals contributed to the Irish cause, illustrating

that the fight for independence was not solely fought with weapons but also through the power of ideas and community solidarity. Each man, in his own right, became a quintessential part of the larger narrative of Irish resistance, creating a tapestry woven with both the threads of violence and the fabric of peaceful persistence.

Following the failed Fenian Rebellion, life settled into a routine for Thomas as he toiled away on his modest farm in Curraheen. The rolling hills and the majestic presence of Slievenamon loomed large in his life, providing not just sustenance but a wellspring of inspiration for his poetry. The mountain, with its lush valley, became a canvas for his creative expression, often finding its way into his verses as a symbol of resilience and beauty in a tumultuous world. On quiet evenings, Thomas would make his way down to Drangan village, seeking the warmth of Cusack's pub, where camaraderie and lively discussions filled the air. There, he would reconnect with his old friend Michael, who managed the pub alongside his sister Bridget. Their conversations often revolved around the pressing issues of the day, with politics and the national struggle featuring prominently, reflecting the passionate sentiments of the two men and their community.

The 1870s brought a slight surge of hope for Thomas and his fellow farmers as the land around Drangan proved fertile, yielding good harvests. The economic stability that accompanied the good years allowed farmers to meet their rents, a relief that painted a veneer of prosperity as long as market prices held firm. Yet, as the decade progressed, a cruel twist of fate began to unfold. Unpredictable weather patterns and subsequent poor harvests plagued the region, causing financial strain and complicated the already fragile relationship between landlords and tenants. The severity of the situation was felt most acutely in the west of Ireland, where desperate conditions compelled many to take action. In response to the growing discontent, the National Land League was established in October of 1879 by the fervent leaders Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell, igniting a movement that sought to address the injustices suffered by tenants across the country. This pivotal moment in Irish history would set the stage for the struggles that Thomas, Michael, and countless others would face in their quest for justice and equity in the years to come.

In the parish of Drangan and Cloneen, life had maintained a sense of normality during a tumultuous period for much of the country, particularly the western regions beset by hardship and strife. However, the relative peace was deceptive, as the seeds of change were already germinating, waiting for the right moment to blossom into a movement that would reshape the landscape of South Tipperary. At the foot of Slievenamon, Cloneen would soon transform from a quiet village into the epicentre of a burgeoning land reform movement, fuelled by the injustices faced by local tenants.

One such family, the Mahers, had enjoyed generations of stability as prosperous tenants of the Beasley family, renting a large farm at Kilburry. Yet, the unfortunate circumstances of a poor harvest in 1879 left them unable to meet their rent obligations, resulting in their eviction in March 1880. The Mahers, undeterred by their plight, chose to remain on the land, but their struggle was far from over, as another eviction notice loomed for May 20th. It was in this climate of desperation and determination that the community rallied under the leadership of Michel Cusack, Thomas Ryan, and Charles Meagher.

On June 22nd, 1880, the Kilburry Land Demonstration Committee, which Thomas Ryan was secretary, convened in the churchyard of Cloneen, marking a pivotal moment in the history of the area. Joined by their Parish Priest, Rev. William Meagher, they laid the foundations for

the first branch of the Irish National Land League, aptly named the Slievenamon Land League. This newly formed organisation would extend its reach, incorporating branches from Drangan, Cloneen, Mullinahone, Ballycullen, Killaghy, Grangemockler, Ballingarry, New Birmingham, Fethard and Knockelly.

The spirit of Kilburry had ignited a collective consciousness among the tenants, establishing a fire of activism that would not only challenge the status quo but also galvanise a larger movement for social justice and equity across the region. Thus, the tranquillity of Drangan and Cloneen was beautifully marred, presaging a fierce struggle for land rights and dignity that would resonate through the annals of Tipperary and Irish history.

By this time, Thomas had become a regular contributor of poetry and stories to local and national newspapers using the pen name, 'A Drangan Boy,' and establishing himself as a significant voice in the literary landscape of Ireland. His verses, often simple and poignant, celebrated the beauty of love and nature, reflecting the serene landscapes that surrounded his home. The mountain that loomed majestically in the background served as both an inspiration and a symbol in his work, a steadfast reminder of the enduring spirit of the Irish people. Yet, beneath the tranquil surface of his verses lay a deeper, more urgent message; the majority of his writings were infused with a sense of purpose that transcended mere aesthetic appreciation.

Thomas Ryan's poetry was a powerful vehicle for conveying the rich tapestry of Ireland's legendary past—a past steeped in history, folklore, and the collective struggles for freedom. In each stanza, he sought to awaken a sense of pride and identity among his readers, urging them to remember the tales of their ancestors who fought valiantly against oppression. His words resonated with an unmistakable passion, stirring the hearts of his audience, and igniting a fire of resistance against the injustices that plagued their land. By harnessing the emotive power of poetry, Thomas became more than just a writer; he emerged as a fervent advocate for his people, using his craft as a form of propaganda to inspire a renewed fight for land and liberty, reminding all who read his work of the sacrifice and resilience that defined their heritage.

Through the lens of his poems, Thomas Ryan painted a vivid picture of Ireland's past—its heroes and heroines, its myths, and struggles—and called upon his fellow countrymen and women to reclaim their narrative. In a time marked by political turmoil and national longing, his literary contributions served as both a celebration of Irish identity and a rallying cry for action. With every poem, Thomas captured the complex interplay of love, nature, and the fighting spirit that coursed through the veins of his beloved homeland, proving that poetry is not only an art form but also a powerful instrument for social change and national awakening.

After the formation of the Slievenamon Land League, Thomas Ryan took on the crucial role of secretary, dedicating himself to the cause of land reform with unyielding passion. His efforts extended across South Tipperary, where he tirelessly travelled to help establish new societies advocating for tenant rights. In September 1880, he journeyed as far as Carrick-on-Suir to collaborate with Michael P. Boyton, the organizing secretary of the Irish National League. Together, they successfully formed a new branch of the League, a testament to Thomas's unwavering commitment to securing justice for tenant farmers. Despite his deep immersion in this pivotal movement, Thomas balanced his activism with managing his farm and nurturing his burgeoning talent for writing, showcasing his ability to juggle multiple responsibilities.

Amidst the fervent whirlwind of activism that characterised his life, Thomas Ryan managed to carve out precious moments of romance, culminating in his engagement to Francis Bradshaw of Lismoynan. As they looked toward their shared future in Thomas' quaint home, which offered breathtaking views of Slievenamon and its valley, Francis likely felt a deep sense of pride and connection. She envisioned a life with a man whose unwavering dedication to the land and the struggles of fellow farmers became a cornerstone of their relationship. Yet, their budding happiness was soon overshadowed by an ominous cloud of anxiety, ignited by the threatening presence of George Bradshaw, a wealthy local landlord. Despite sharing Francis's surname, George was no relation, but he bore a visceral resentment toward Thomas.

As Thomas and Francis navigated their engagement and dreams of a life together, they were confronted with an unsettling reality: George Bradshaw was pressing eviction threats against Thomas, accusing him of falling behind on rent. His hostility felt personal, and despite several court appearances, Thomas quickly learned that George was both unyielding and resolute in his opposition. On August 16, 1882, tragedy struck as George succeeded in evicting Thomas from his cherished home and farm, demonstrating a blatant disregard for the values Thomas held dear. In a poignant reflection penned later that year, Thomas recounted how George's motivation was rooted in disdain for his activism with the Land League, revealing a clear animosity: "*George Bradshaw made no secret of the principle he attacked me on – because I was so hard working in the Land League cause, and but him or me shall only be in one parish, let alone allowing me to live on what he called his property."* Despite the turmoil surrounding them, Thomas and Francis found the strength to unite in marriage two months later, on October 22, 1882, drawing resilience from their shared commitment to each other and the values they both cherished.

Now the newlyweds found themselves victims of the very injustices that Thomas was fighting against. Evicted from the land that had been in his family for generations, the couple found themselves homeless, thrust into the ranks of those they were striving to defend. This heart-breaking turn of events underscores the profound challenges faced by many during this tumultuous period of Irish history, where personal lives were often irrevocably intertwined with broader social and political struggles for land rights and justice.

Thomas Ryan was no longer a farmer and by early 1883 with a grant of £8 from the Mansion House Evicted Tenants Fund, Thomas and Francis would move into a small, thatched house in the village he loved. His new landlord was the Earl of Ross. Thomas Ryan was now truly "A Drangan Boy." Despite the change in his occupation, his passion for poetry and storytelling remained unwavering. He contributed articles, poems, and stories to various local and national newspapers and magazines, earning some income while also working as a labourer for nearby farmers. Yet, the persistent struggle for land reform consumed most of his energy and attention.

Throughout this turbulent period, Thomas, and his fellow land leaguers from Drangan and Cloneen faced tremendous adversity that tested their resilience and commitment to the land struggle. Between 1886 and 1893, Thomas battled poor health on numerous occasions, which severely hindered his ability to earn a living. During these trying times, his friend Michael Cusack arranged several testimonials, helping to gather financial support for Thomas, who faced a precarious financial situation. Despite personal hardships such as eviction, declining health, and the frequent imprisonment of Cusack, Thomas, and the people of Drangan remained steadfast in their dedication to the cause. Instead of being demoralised by the

suppression of the Land League, this adversity only fuelled their resolve and commitment, ultimately leading to the establishment of the Drangan Irish National League.

While the Land League primarily concentrated on land reform, the nascent National League broadened its ambitions to encompass a campaign for self-government and Irish Home Rule. This pivotal shift in strategy highlighted the growing political awareness and aspirations of Thomas and his compatriots. Undeterred by the political and personal challenges they faced, Thomas continued to advocate for Home Rule into the 20th century, aligning himself with influential leaders such as John Redmond. His commitment to the cause was evident when he spoke at a meeting in Drangan, passionately encouraging local Irish Volunteers to enlist for service in the Great War. Through his activism and oratorial efforts, Thomas embodied the spirit of two intertwined struggles—one for land justice and the other for national sovereignty—demonstrating that even in the darkest of times, hope and determination could lead to transformative change.

The tireless efforts of Thomas, Michael, Rev. William O'Connor, John Morris, John Kennedy, and many others achieved a significant milestone in the history of the Drangan branch of the Irish National League. On May 10th, 1884, their collective work culminated in a momentous event that would forever resonate in their community. The branch hosted an assembly featuring prominent figures, including Michael Davitt, the founding father of the Land League, which attracted approximately 25,000 people from across the country to their small village. The successful meeting served not only as a morale booster for the local league members but also invigorated the broader national movement, solidifying Drangan's role in the ongoing fight for justice and land rights in Ireland.

The influence of Thomas Ryan's poetry and writings throughout the 1880s and 1890s cannot be underestimated, as he emerged as a pivotal figure in shaping the cultural and national consciousness of Tipperary and Ireland during this transformative period. His serialised stories, such as "Philip O'Dwyer" (The Schoolmaster Abroad) and "Churchtown House," captivated readers with their portrayal of Irish life, folklore, and history. Through these narratives, Ryan not only entertained but also educated his audience, fostering a profound understanding of their heritage. More importantly, his works kindled a fervent passion for a free Ireland, inspiring a generation of young men and women to envision a future liberated from British colonial rule. Ryan's contributions extended far beyond mere storytelling; he was a visionary educator who recognised the importance of reviving Irish folklore, mythology, and the Irish language long before organisations like the Gaelic League took up the mantle. By seamlessly weaving nationalistic themes into his poetry and other works, Ryan served as a catalyst for a burgeoning nationalist sentiment, wielding his pen as a secret weapon in the struggle for Irish independence. His language was charged with emotive power, capable of stirring the souls of his readers and rallying them to the cause of freedom.

In essence, Thomas Ryan's legacy is one of empowerment and education, inspiring a cultural renaissance that would ultimately ripple through the fabric of Irish society. This Fenian Poet's work would influence many. As young readers absorbed his words, they were not only entertained but also ignited by a revolutionary spirit, one that would lay the groundwork for the next generation to continue the fight for an independent Ireland. Ryan's work is a testament to the profound impact that literature can have in shaping national identity and political consciousness, reminding us that poets and writers can be powerful agents of change in the quest for justice and freedom.

The Land War agitations and the subsequent Plan of Campaign in the 1880s marked a pivotal moment in the struggle for Irish land reform, leading to a series of transformative Irish Land Acts from various British governments. Among these was the Wyndham Land Purchase Act of 1903, which effectively facilitated the break-up of large estates and promoted the transfer of land ownership to rural landholders and tenants. This legislative change had a profound impact on individuals like Thomas, who had been employed as the manager of Coffey's Creamery in Drangan Village since the 1890s. With the newfound opportunities for land ownership, Thomas was able to purchase his modest home, replacing its traditional thatch roof with a solid slate one. This upgrade proved fortuitous when, during an attack on the R.I.C barracks attached to his house by local members of the IRA in 1920, the slate roof provided crucial protection against fire. As he witnessed the younger generation of Drangan and Tipperary men rally around the cause of a free Ireland, Thomas must have felt a deep sense of pride and hope. His personal achievements mirrored the broader aspirations of the Irish people seeking justice and autonomy, embodying the spirit of resilience and determination that characterised this period of Irish history.

As the Land War gradually subsided due to various land acts, Tom, affectionately known to those around him, remained unwavering in his commitment to the rights of the farm labourers. His conviction that they deserved not just a place to work but also a home and a small plot of land drove him to continue fighting for their cause. Even as he took on the responsibilities of manager at Michael Coffey's creamery, Tom's passion for advocacy did not wane. He poured his heart and soul into his poetry, crafting evocative pieces like "The Hat My Father Wore" and "My Erin of the Balmy Air," both penned around 1896. These poems resonated with the struggles and dreams of the people he championed, serving as a source of inspiration and hope during a transformative time in Irish history.

However, Tom's position at Coffey's creamery introduced a complex dynamic in his relationships, specifically with his longtime friend Michael Cusack, the secretary of the newly established Drangan Co-operative Creamery in 1897. An underlying tension emerged, particularly around the issue of water rights and well access in 1903, which prompted a rift between Tom's responsibilities as a manager and the loyalty he felt toward the farmers who had once fought with him during the Land War. This conflict not only tested Tom's dedication to his employer but also placed strain on Michael Cusack, who found himself torn between his friendship with Tom and his role in promoting the Drangan creamery.

In the end, Michael chose to uphold his longstanding friendship with Tom, a decision that reflected the deep bonds forged during their shared struggles for social justice. While tensions ebbed and flowed, they ultimately found a way to navigate their differences. Yet, in a turn of fate, Coffey's creamery faced economic challenges that led to its closure by 1913, while the Drangan Co-operative Creamery flourished, reflecting a shift in the agricultural landscape.

In August 1909, Drangan and Tipperary lost a remarkable figure with the passing of Michael Cusack on August 7th. His death left a profound void in the lives of his friends and colleagues, particularly Tom Ryan, who considered Cusack a lifelong friend. Despite the weight of grief, Ryan recognised the necessity of ensuring that Cusack's contributions were not overshadowed by the passage of time.

In the years following his friend's passing, Tom Ryan took it upon himself to initiate a commemorative effort that would honour Michael Cusack's life and legacy. Under his stewardship, a dedicated committee was formed, reflecting the depth of affection and respect

the community held for Cusack. The culmination of their efforts arrived in May 1913 when Ryan stood proudly beside John Dillon M.P. for the unveiling of a statue commemorating the beloved figure. This moment was not merely a celebration of Cusack's achievements but a clarion call to future generations about the importance of loving and serving one's country. Inscribed upon the statue were the timeless words: “He Loved His Country And Served His Kind. Go Thou And Do Likewise.” These words encapsulated the spirit of Cusack’s life, serving as an enduring charge for all who came after him to engage with their heritage and strive toward a greater good.

By the time Michael Cusack's statue was unveiled, Tom Ryan found himself navigating a difficult period in his life, marked by the closure of Coffey’s creamery. The loss of his job weighed heavily on him, compounded by recurring health issues that once again prevented him from working. Throughout his struggles, Michael Cusack had been a steadfast ally, stepping in during Tom's previous health crises to organise testimonials and support him. Yet, this time things were different. The community of Drangan, led by the directors and manager of Drangan Co-operative Creamery, rallied around Tom to ensure he felt the warmth of their support. With their collective efforts, a heartfelt testimonial was organized in Tom's honour, showcasing the deep respect and affection the people had for him. As fate would have it, after his health improved, Tom was offered a position in the ‘new’ creamery. All past disagreements had faded into the background, overshadowed by the spirit of camaraderie and a shared commitment to uplift one of their own.

When World War I erupted in 1914, Tom remained steadfast in his support for John Redmond and the cause of Home Rule, believing in the importance of self-governance for Ireland. In early 1915, he felt compelled to channel his emotions into his poetry, resulting in the creation of “Our Gallant New Brigade.” This stirring piece paid homage to the young Irish men who bravely answered the call to arms, leaving their homes to fight on the battlefields of France. One of these young men, Dinny Sadlier, would return from France and play a vital role in The War of Independence, giving his life for Ireland. Through his words, Tom sought to not only honour their courage but also to rally others to understand the significance of their sacrifice. The poem resonated with many, encapsulating a sense of pride and sorrow intertwined with the national struggle. Sadly, before the war had ended Tom would be devastated by the death of his beloved Francis in July 1918. Francis had inspired many of his ‘Love’ poems such as “Oh, Hasn’t The Day Felt Long.”

After Francis's death, Tom continued to reside in his village home, dedicating himself to writing and the joys of crafting verse that echoed the dreams and aspirations of his community. A man who cherished conversation, Tom engaged fervently with the issues that shaped Ireland's future, remaining deeply invested in the hopes of his fellow villagers. He would have taken immense pride in the sight of a new generation stepping up to carry on the fight for a better Ireland—a cause that had been central to his life’s work. The boys he had watched grow into young men formed A Company (Drangan) 7th Battalion, Third Tipperary Brigade. Among them were village boys such as Tommy O’Donovan, Harry Bush, Tommy Carroll, and the Cuddihy brothers from up the lane, alongside other locals like the Clancy brothers, John Brett, the Strappe brothers, the Moroney brothers, and the Sadlier brothers, along with others like Hackett, Moloney, Grace, and Foley. These spirited youths, well-acquainted with Tom Ryan’s thoughtful poems, had studied his works in the very same local boys' school that once served as the church where Tom’s parents had wed. For more than fifty years, his writing inspired many, and with the emergence of this new wave of passionate young men and women, it seemed that Tom's dreams were on the brink of becoming a reality.

Tom Ryan, known affectionately as 'A Drangan Boy,' was a witness to both the exhilarating rise of a free Ireland and the devastating Civil War that followed, living to see the complexities of his beloved land in turmoil. His heart must have swelled with a profound pride for his contributions to Ireland's ongoing narrative and struggle. Tom passed away from a stroke on December 15, 1924, the community he held dear rallied together to honour his legacy. In April of the following year, a memorial committee was formed with the objective to commemorate their beloved hero and friend. They erected a beautiful Celtic cross at his grave, inscribed with the heartfelt words: *"Thomas Ryan, Poet and Patriot. Pen Name A Drangan Boy. Erected by the people as a tribute to his long and able service in his country's struggle for freedom."* Today, Tom's resting place lies serenely beside that of his friend Michael Cusack, a testament to a life dedicated to art, advocacy, and the never-ending pursuit of a better Ireland.

In 1898, Thomas Ryan penned an evocative piece titled "On Slievenamon, A Chaplet of Memories." In it, he invited us to "ascend the old mountain, if not in reality, at least in spirit." With this gentle prompting, Ryan encourages us to embark on a mindful journey, not merely physically ascending the heights of Slievenamon but also exploring the riches of our collective history and memory intertwined with the landscape surrounding us.
I would like to invite you, ‘if not in reality, at least in spirit,’ to transport ourselves back to the village of Drangan when Tom Ryan lived there, around the year 1900. Although modernity has reshaped much of the village, many traces of its past linger, echoing the lives and stories of those who walked its streets long before us.

A Stroll Through Drangan.
The Lives and Legacy of its Residents in 1900

Starting our journey on the Newtown Road the first house we encounter is Cusack's Public House, an antiquated establishment that serves as a focal point for the local community, especially with the more politically minded. The public house is ably run by siblings Michael (Mike) and Bridget Cusack, both in their twilight years. Their lives reflect a rich tapestry woven through the fabric of Irish history and local pride.

Mike, a tall man whose physical suffering is visibly etched on his face, is celebrated as a local hero for his unwavering commitment to the Irish cause. His lifelong efforts, particularly with the Land League, earned him the respect and admiration of residents, culminating in a statue erected in his honour in 1913. In contrast, Bridget, a tall and graceful figure, is regarded as a natural leader among the women of the parish. She acts as a crucial liaison with the clergy and nuns, bridging connections that shape community life.

On reaching Cusack's people instinctively cross the road, as walking on the same side as Cusack's meant enduring the stench of urine emitting from a small hut at the base of the old church bell tower, used as a toilet by the boys in the school.

Crossing the street we arrive at two old cottages. The first is home to the Farrell family. Paddy Farrell, once a soldier, now lives with the burden of deafness while trying to earn a meagre living as a mason and agricultural labourer. Yet, his passion for reading offers a respite from the harsh realities of life. His wife Catherine works tirelessly to maintain their crumbling home and raise their two young boys, Ned and Henry, creating a foundation of love amidst their struggles.

Next, we come upon Onny (Hanoria) Stapleton's house, home to a dignified, grey-haired lady known within the community as “the holder of secrets.” Her front room serves as a weekly dispensary for Dr. Heffernan of Killenaule, a position that elevates Onny's status in the village.

Continuing along, we reach the residence of the old schoolteacher and current sacristan, Jimmy Drew. Accompanied by his sister Judy (Johanna), Jimmy is both respected and revered for his intelligence, often being referred to as a genius—a title both humbling and prestigious in a close-knit community.

After Jimmy's house, is Feely's Public House, proudly displaying a sign that reads “J. Feely, Licensed to sell Tea, Wine, and Spirits.” Run by widowed Maria Feely, her daughter Stasia, and her sister Lizzie Duggan, this establishment has evolved beyond a simple pub. It offers essential goods for farmers and is known for extending generous credit to its patrons.

Turning left at Feely's, the clang of metal on metal reaches our ears from John Pollard's forge. John, a typical blacksmith with a leather apron and a quick wit, is often seen as a fixture of the village. His sister Kate is equally respected for her commitment to the church choir, where she plays the pump organ, her devotion to her craft and faith acting as a beacon for many in the area.

Adjacent to Pollard's forge stands the third public house, owned by Michael Quirke, who also balances roles as a farmer and auctioneer. (By strange coincidence the present owner works in the same three trades.) Michael Quirke had taken over the establishment from the Minogues originally from Ballyline near Callan. After John Minogue died the family attempted to keep the business going but eventually sold and moved back to Ballyline. Michael Quirke’s establishment transitioned from a modest shop selling wine and spirits primarily for post-funeral gatherings to a bustling public house where locals gather. Quirke's family life complements his professional one; married to Maggie Britton from Cloneen, they raised four daughters and two sons, including Bill, a significant figure in the War of Independence.

Bill Quirke’s legacy is particularly noteworthy. He became the Commanding Officer of the Second Southern Division during the war, suffering arrest and internment on Spike Island before escaping. His political career afterward saw him elected as a Senator for Fianna Fáil, a testament to his enduring commitment to the Irish cause and to the people of Tipperary.

The final house on this side of the village is a family farm belonging to Johnny Morris and his wife Dora (Hanora). Without children of their own, they took in Dora's niece Mary and her nephew Tommy Donovan. Tommy Donovan would go on to be one of the founding members of the Volunteers in Drangan during the War of Independence, and become the first Commander of the Seventh Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, tragically falling as the first Drangan casualty in the struggle for independence.

Crossing the road leads us to the “Old Graveyard” known as St. Mary’s. Large trees loom over the ruins of an ancient church destroyed by Cromwell's forces in 1650. The eerie atmosphere of the graveyard serves as a reminder of the village's endurance through centuries of struggle.

As we continue back into the village, the smell of freshly baked bread wafts through the air from one of the three local bakeries. Mike Russell, the baker, alongside his wife Margaret, runs a shop that draws in the community. The establishment thrives with the help of their two teenage daughters, Bridie and Cathy, while Bill Murray, the manager from the newly established Drangan Co-operative Creamery, lives and manages his affairs above the bakery.

Beside Russell’s house is Bushe's Lane, here we find Jack, a plaster by trade, living with his wife Kate and their two sons. Known for his head for heights, Jack maintains the church roof—an act of bravery that echoes through the community. His son Harry is another youthful resident destined to be part of Ireland’s historical fight for sovereignty.

Continuing our path, we arrive at the Convent. Built in 1842 by Rev. O'Shaughnessy who lived here until his death in 1869. It then became a Convent and school run by the Tipperary town branch of the Sisters of Mercy. In 1920 the New Inn branch took over and ran a school here until 1985. The Convent closed its doors in 1997 after over a century of shaping the education and faith of the village's youth.

Nestled next to the convent is the 'The Lane,' Just up the lane, adjacent to a small side gate leading into the schoolyard, stands the crumbling home of John Hanrahan. This modest dwelling is shared by John, his daughter Nora, her husband Dick Scott, and their two spirited children, Molly and Jim.

Continuing down the lane and taking a right turn reveals two derelict houses. Soon, we arrive at the home of Michael and Kate Drew, proud parents of five children: Ellie, Pat, Mary, Bridget, and Margaret. Michael, a talented tailor, and Kate, an equally skilled seamstress, play an important role in the fabric of village life as they craft and mend garments for the parish. Their neighbours, old John Dunne and his wife Statia, along with their daughter Margaret, own a small shop that caters to the everyday needs of the community. Further up, Ned Croke, another tailor, diligently serves local farmers, ensuring they are well-equipped for their labour.

As we stroll past Tobin's, the rhythmic sound of a hammer gently tapping on a cobbler's last fills the air. Mick O'Carroll, the village cobbler, is tirelessly occupied with the delicate art of shoe repair, while across the street his wife Ellen manages a drapery shop. Their son Tom, like many young men in the village, is destined to play a part in the turbulent events of the War of Independence, emblematic of the village's youthful spirit and commitment to their homeland.

A little further, a delightful aroma of fresh bread wafts through the air as little Tom Connors busies himself with his craft. His sister Jane, a passionate conversationalist, tends to their home, known for her friendly chats with the neighbours. The heart of the village resonates with everyday exchanges, a tapestry of lives connected through work and community ties.

Nearby, the R.I.C. barracks is home to a small contingent of constables, typically numbering between three and five. While generally decent, their relationship with locals fluctuates based on the prevailing political sentiments. The tension culminated in 1920 when the barracks fell victim to local resistance, a profound reflection of the village's struggles during that turbulent time. Just next door resides Tom Ryan,'The Drangan Boy,' manager of Coffey's Creamery. Always supported by his loving wife Francis, Tom is a man of intellect and eloquence and is well-regarded for his engaging conversations.

Fr. Conn Ryan, the local curate since 1893 resides nearby. A native of Murroe, Co. Limerick, Fr. Conn is also a cousin of Dr. Harty, the esteemed Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. His presence in the village is marked by warmth and wisdom. He would eventually move into Loretto House on the New Line road. Sadly, after a short illness, he would ultimately find rest in 1916.

Adjacent to Fr. Conn's residence, the Slattery family operates the post office. Old Phil, the postmaster, regales visitors with stories, aided by his daughter Maggie. Their establishment serves as a lifeline to the world beyond Drangan.

On the corner across from them is the bustling bakery owned by Patsy Dunne and his sons, Pat and John, the latter known for his enchanting singing voice that resonates through the church aisles every Sunday. Patsy's wife lovingly tends to their shop and their blind daughter Mary, embodying the spirit of resilience and compassion found throughout the village.

As we make our way back down the village, we pass the renovated shop of the Noonan sisters from Cloneen, Rebecca and Marie, who run a grocery store with the help of their sister Ellen, a talented music teacher. Living with them is Ellen O'Keeffe, a dairymaid in the creamery, highlighting the network of mutual support that characterises village life. Continuing our walk, we encounter the bustling farmyard of the Slattery family, followed by the solemn presence of the village church—a centrepiece for community gatherings.

Adjacent to the church as we already mentioned is the drapery shop, overseen by Ellen O'Carroll, the cobbler's wife. The surrounding homes whisper tales of the past, including that of Norrie (Hanorah) Callanan and beside her, Ned Ryan and his two sons, John and Pat, the latter destined to become a Christian Brother, dedicating his life to service before tragically dying on missions in the East.

Finally, as our stroll comes to an end, we approach the Boys' School, an old church structure built in 1806 that transitioned into a school following the construction of the new church in 1853. This landmark stands as a testimony to the village's enduring spirit and its commitment to education and community, capturing the essence of the lives intertwined in this vibrant corner of the world.

This journey through Drangan is not merely a walk through a village; it's a vivid illustration of lives intertwined, each person's story contributing to the local narrative that proudly celebrates both individual sacrifice and collective resilience. As these homes and establishments stood, they were testaments to a community that kept its past alive while looking resolutely toward and influencing the future village and people.

1901 Census
Thomas Doran's Diaries.

Part 2

THE WORKS OF THOMAS RYAN

A DRANGAN BOY

(Researched and edited by TJ Keane)

On researching Thomas Ryan's writings, I discovered a fascinating tapestry of slight variations in many of his poems and stories across different sources. The rich authenticity of his work is compelling, yet it presents a challenge for those seeking to understand the essence of his literary voice. I have endeavoured to utilize what I believe to be the most authentic versions of his writings, remaining true to his distinctive style. As you engage with his works, you may notice an array of spelling variations, unique turns of phrase, and adjustments in word choice that may seem unfamiliar today. These characteristics are emblematic of the time in which Ryan wrote, reflecting the linguistic conventions and cultural nuances of his era. In honouring his original text, I have opted not to alter his words, allowing readers to experience his writings as closely as possible to how they were intended, preserving the unique flavour and historical context of his literary contributions.

ON SLIEVENAMON
A CHAPLET OF MEMORIES.

By
A Drangan Boy.

Like a giant sentinel keeping watch and ward over the vales of "honey" and "gold" which dot the fair face of Tipperary, stands the old "mountain of fair women," telling tales of the past and keeping fresh and green those recollections, merry and sad by turns, which must, ever and anon, kaleidoscopically cast their shadows athwart the tablets of our memory.

Tales of war; tales of the chase; tales of love; tales of suffering and outlawry, fictitious and real, are woven around your name, old Slievenamon.

Those memories travel back far in the dim and distant past, when Firbolg and Fomorian, De-Danaan and Milesian struggled for supremacy in that "Isle of Destiny" which savants and soothsayers told them lay beyond the "Western Waters." And when Celt and Dane measured their trusty blades on saffron kilt and polished armour, Slievenamon too, often re-echoed the cheers of victory and wails of defeat, which arose from the valley of the Suir, as the northern buccaneers pushed on towards Clonmel.

The Danes were defeated, and then came the Normans. The fight still continued, too often in fratricidal strife, which left Ireland beneath the exterminating blows of Elizabeth, Cromwell, and subsequent undertakers who were in at the death and burial of this unfortunate country.

But let us ascend the old mountain, if not in reality, at least in spirit, and gaze enraptured in the grand vista which unfolds before us. There lies the "Golden Vale" dressed in Nature's magnificent drapery, splendid as it was when it drew from the blood-stained butcher of Drogheda, the memorable exclamation—"This is a land worth fighting for." True, it is a land worth fighting for, and dear knows, fought for it has been, well and often too.

Centuries passed over this fair scene, during which an Irishman's tenure of his patrimony, was written only on his sword, and the quarries and sandpits of the "valleys near Slievenamon" disclose the rustic relics of those well used writing materials which then did duty for the parchment scrolls and gold-nibbed pens of the present.

The noble estuary of the sister rivers, Barrow, Suir, and Nore, can be easily descried from our place of vantage, as it opens into the sea below the old city of Waterford. Memories of the Norman invasion spring into being as we gaze on this noble waste of waters. We are taken back to the abduction of the "faithless bride of Breffni," daughter of the King of Meath, and wife of O'Ruarc, Prince of Breffni. The husband appealed to the high King who sent an army to restore to him his erring bride, or, at least, to send her to a religious retreat, which she entered, and spent the forty remaining years of her life doing penance for her grave scandal, which let us hope she personally atoned for, although her sin is visited on her unfortunate country down even to the present day.

The seducer would not give in. He burned his chief city of Ferns and retired into the fastnesses of Wicklow, sooner than render allegiance to the Ard-Righ Most of his clansmen,

to their honour be it remembered, deserted him, and in his black and bitter vengeance against his native land, he sailed for England to solicit King Henry's assistance in his treacherous and unmanly rebellion. Since the day that the sons of Harold raised reinforcements in Ireland to help them to retain the throne of their father, its Norman conquerors cherished the idea of adding the "emerald gem" to that hard won crown. So, when Dermot M'Morrogh sought out Henry Plantagenet of England, the murderer of the saintly Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, the husband of the notorious Eleanor, the divorced wife of Louis the VII of France, he was received with favour, because his mental vision pictured a royal road for the cherished desires of his House. But, like the Romans of earlier days, so heavy did " William the Conqueror " feel the weight of Irish arms in the Vale of Tamer, and other places where he encountered them that himself and his successors paused long before they would fain contest their valour, on "Native Heath." What congenial company! The Irish seducer and the English murderer! But, with the red blood of the saintly bishop and other complications of his hands, Henry, although well satisfied to do so, was unable just then to give the required assistance. Instead, he gave the arch-traitor a letter addressed to his subjects authorising them to assist McMorrough in his treason, against his lawful liege and King. Though the sorrows of seventy winters had passed over his brow they failed to cool his terrible thirst for vengeance on his country. He published Henry's letter as a proclamation through England but failed to obtain support. He then turned to Wales. There he met a son of the celebrated Nesta, a lady whose platonic virtue is inter-woven in the origin of the highest names of Irish-Norman blood.

One of her children, Robert Fitz-Stephen, then a prisoner, got his release on the understanding that he would raise an army, amongst his maternal relations to aid Dermot. Then came Strongbow, next Maurice Fitzgerald, another son of Nesta, and her grandson, Raymond le Gros who entrenched himself on the rock of Dundonald in Waterford Harbour. The men of Idrom and the Decies, under their chiefs, O'Ryan and O'Phelan, attacked them and were defeated with a loss of five hundred prisoners, who were inhumanly butchered, their legs being violently broken, they were hurled off the rocks into the tide. Then indeed did Ireland's martyrdom commence. And to cap the climax, Ireland's own sons lent a helping hand. Donagh O'Brien, Prince of Thomond, threw off his allegiance to the High-King, just as that monarch was gathering his forces to repel the invader, and plunged him into a fratricidal civil strife in his rere.

And the page of history which tells of the signal defeat of the English at Peafield, just immediately beneath Slievenamon, by the chivalrous, ill-fated Earl of Desmond, tells, also, of an attack made on him further on at Knockgraffin, by the traitorous Ormonds who had seceded from his league.

And when we turn round, and look almost into the streets of Clonmel, memory conjures ' up the bloody breach where fell before the pikes of Hugh Dhuv and his hardy countrymen, the war-bronzed veterans of the butcher Cromwell. It is not our purpose to enter into a detailed account of the bravery displayed on that occasion by the men of Clonmel, aided by the gallant fifteen hundred who, under the leadership of this heroic nephew of the noble Owen Roe, held twenty thousand blood-thirsty" Iron-sides " at bay for the space of two months. Suffice it to say that when the gutters of Clonmel ran red with the blood of the invaders, as they died in the breach and street, and when the discord which prevailed in the Councils of the chiefs prevented the arrival of succour, Hugh Dhuv left the town and bent his weary way towards his native Tyrone. Had Lord Ormond and Castleconnell waived their etiquette and complied with instructive request of O'Neill, Cromwell's big army would have been held before Clonmel, harassed by the forces which those two generals could have thrown on his

rear. But they failed to agree, the Limerick men stayed at home, and Clonmel was left to its fate.

One hundred years passed away. A century of cruel bigoted persecution devastated the fair plains of Tipperary, and again we are in Clonmel, witnessing the cold-blooded murder of an Irish *Soggarth aroon* who ventured to raise his humble voice in defence of his persecuted people. In the year 1762, the Marquis of Drogheda's brutal soldiery were out Cromwelling Cromwell through the smoking hamlets of the County. Murdered men, burning homesteads and outraged women marked their sanguinary paths. For having the temerity to collect money to defend some of his parishioners, whom those fiends had in prison. Father Sheehy was charged with treason of which he was acquitted in the King's Bench, Dublin. But the Cromwellians were not to be baffled thus. An indictment charging him with the murder of one. Bridge, whom the tyrants had spirited into concealment, was framed. Father Sheehy was arrested as he emerged from the Dublin dock, conveyed a prisoner to Clonmel, and then "Out of Hell there was no redemption." A cattle stealer, taken out of Kilkenny jail, and an abandoned woman, were fitted out for the occasion and swore his life away, which feat they accomplished on the 13th of March 1766, in the thirty-eight year of his age.

He was executed, with many other of his relatives, two days afterwards, and his head placed on a spear over the old gaol of Clonmel, where it bleached in sunshine and shower during twenty long years. His grave, in the old churchyard of Shandraghan, is to-day one of the pilgrimage spots in Tipperary, while his persecutors have passed away, remembered only in the execrations of a people whom their diabolical ingenuity was unable to extirpate.

Just looking around again, we espy almost at our feet the "old tumble downtown of Mullinahone," as it has been described by a "Times" Commissioner some thirty years ago. The storm-beaten walls of an old keep, said to have been built by the Knights of St. John, called " The Old Stone " arrest our attention, because it tells its tale of troubled times in glorious ninety-eight, when above its wind-swept battlements glared the head of a so-called rebel, a travelling hatter known as ' Norton of Mullinahone.

At this centre of Tipperary remembrances, also the eye passing from the ruined tower of Mullinahone, beneath whose shadow sleeps the patriot-poet who has immortalised Slievenamon and its golden vales in tale and song the gentle pure-souled, C. J. Kickham—and glancing out over the broad plains of Tipperary, rests on that historic pile, ruined and dismantled, which looks down on the old city of Cashel, like another Niobe on Mount Sipylus, lamenting the fate of her children. What memories throng around us as we gaze on this lordly ruin! It takes us back to the dawn of Christianity and beyond it, because it is related that Cashel was concealed in a thick mist until it was found by swine herds in the employment of the Kings of Kile and Muscraidhe.

A figure appeared on the Rock, which those herdmen described as " bright as the sun," and a voice sweeter than any music they had ever heard. It is stated that the figure was the angel Victor, who blessed the Rock and foretold the arrival of Saint Patrick to Cashel. The Saint tells us in his "Confessions," that he had a dream in which he saw a man named Victor bearing letters to him from Ireland. These "Confessions" plainly prove, if proof be wanted, that Ireland had a written literature before the advent of St. Patrick. This discovery of Cashel is stated to have been made in the reign of Conall Core, King of Munster, who proceeded there and built a fortress called, *Lios na Laoch-raidhe.* which means, a fort of heroes. Keating says that it is on this rock he used to receive his royal rents, from which it was called *Caiseal,*

Cios meaning rock and *ail*, a tribute. But it is said that there were two *Carriag Phadraics*, one the rock as it is now named the " Rock of Cashel," and the other, the stone on which the Kings of Munster were crowned, which stone is supposed to be the base of the Cross, which was erected on the Rock. But confusion reigns supreme in reference to the two rocks. If we were to relate half the tales we have heard and read about Cashel's famous "Rock," our little article would swell into volumes. But let those tales be mythical or real, it must be admitted that a great lot of Ancient Irish History is woven around the desecrated monument of Erin's olden glory, which we discern from our position on Slievenamon. There is no necessity of entering here into any lengthened account of St. Patrick's connection with Cashel. His baptism of King Aengus, the grandson of Core, and the episode of the staff piercing his foot, needs no recall. Kings and Bishops dwelt there. The names of many who, in literature and art, have left their mark on the history of the country, are closely connected with Cashel. Cormac M'Cullinan the author of " Cormack's Glossary " and the " Psalter of Cashel " dwelt there. Brian Boru erected a fort on the Rock and Cormack M'Carthy, whose church stands a crowning monument of Ireland's Ancient architecture, and Archbishop O'Heney's celebrated answer to the Norman Knight who twitted the Irish Church on its lack of martyrs—" Now, at all events, men have come into the country who know so well how to make martyrs, this reproach would soon be taken away " deserves remembrance, and surely enough, the answer was prophetic. Martyrs' blood was doomed to dye the historic pile in goodly quantities ere many years had passed. And Slievenamon, you have many dark and gruesome tales to tell of the martyrdom of many of Tipperary's bravest sons and fairest daughters. Since the days of Father Sheehy, Tipperary had been dragooned and persecuted more than any other county in Ireland. Brutal soldiery were running amuck through the county, burning, pillaging, outraging and massacring long before other places felt the iron hand of that inhuman despotism which culminated in the memorable insurrection of '98.

Sir Richard Musgrave declares with evident gusto, in his descriptions of the raids of those savage moss-troopers that great numbers of the insurgents were killed by his lordship's soldiers (Marquis of Drogheda), and that French money was found in the pockets of many of them! Insurgents! "That word proves that Tipperary had been treated as an insurgent county long before the gallant pikemen at Tubberneering trailed England's blood-stained banner in the gory dust.

During forty years had this thing gone on in Tipperary. The representatives of its best families had been either, hung, shot, exiled, or transported. The homes of a once happy peasantry were marked only by stunted and charred clumps of trees, which dotted the large clearings and pointed to the ravages of the destroyer with accusing finger.

Little wonder then that when the slogan sounded in '98, Tipperary did not respond at once. She was crushed and bleeding at every pore. Her vitality exhausted and her natural leaders dead or fled. Yet, when it dawned on the intelligence of those still unconquered peasants that their fellow-countrymen in other counties had taken up arms in defence of the rights they themselves had so long battled for, they made arrangements, as best they could to take the field.

Patriots thronged to the trysting place. A camp was on Corrigmoclear, a spur of the old mountain. French officers were there to lead and brave men to follow, but news of the defeat and surrender of Humbert at Ballinamuck arrived, and after a small brush with the yeoman, the insurgents dispersed and a pall again overspread the historic hill and settled down in gloom over the fair vales of Tipperary, which was lifted partially when the confederate clubs

of this and neighbouring counties set their eyes on Slievenamon, with the intention of making another camping ground for freedom upon its heathery slopes.

The Revolution of '48 came practically to an end in the Widow McCormack's cabbage garden, and Ireland lay like a " corpse on the dissecting table " 'till again, on Slievenamon, brave men gathered who gave vim and worth to an organisation which shock the portals of the British Empire, knocked down an alien church which fattened on an impoverished people who would not conform to its tenets let the consequences be what they may.

Armed insurrection, on their part, was a failure; but they brought the case of their distracted and suffering country on the boards of the world's theatre. The curtain they lifted has not yet fallen. The drama is still being performed. Actors have come and gone. The scenes are still being shifted, always on the winning side. Ireland to-day holds a place she never held before. The proudest statesmen of the Conqueror are compelled to bow to her, and the dawn of freedom is at hand.

ON SLIEVENAMON

By
A Drangan Boy.

Tell us, you rocks, of the sights you have seen,
Where freemen's bright weapons encircled the "Green,"
When clansmen and chiefs roamed your heathery sides,
And plucked your gay flowers to wreathe their young brides.
In the chase and the foray your sons held their place,
Cheered on by your daughters, the pride of our race;
When felons were tracked, and the ban-dogs were on,
On your sides they found shelter, O, loved Slievenamon!

Reader, some twelve months ago we metaphorically strolled together amid the craggy boulders which mark the hero-trodden paths of this old mountain. Together we gazed with pride over the green fields of Tipperary and pointed out the spots marked by history amongst those historic vales. Slievenamon is one of the beacon spots of the south. It has been connected with every stirring event in Ireland's chequered career. Tales of Finn, Ossian, and Oscar, and their feats of prowess in Anner's ancient vales we have heard recounted by the dozen, beside the pesants' hearths in the days when we were young.

Firbolg, Tuatha- De-Danaan, Milesian, Dane and Norman have left their footprints on its heather; and in the long struggle, which is still being waged between the Celt and the Saxon, its name frequently occurs as the rendezvous of insurgents and hiding-place of the patriot rebels who had staked and lost their all in the good old cause. True, it saw its share of that fatal fratricidal strife which, more than the bayonets of foreign mercenaries, prostrated this unhappy country and left it an easy prey to the oppressor. Needless to enlarge on the evils which have occured to Ireland through this baneful dissension. Every hill and valley, tower and town of our land bear evidence of them. The page of history which recounts the single defeat of the English at Peafield, just immediately beneath Slievenamon, by the chivalrous, ill-fated Earl Gerald of Desmond, tells also of an attack made on him, further on, at Knockrappon, by the traitorous Ormonds, who had seceded from his league. Even the great Hugh O'Neill fought against him. Such has been Irish life since the "Saxon's foot first dared pollute out independent shore;" and shall we perpetuate it?

English princes come now as of yore, with the old intent and purpose, to foster and keep alive the self-same fell disunion and subsidise the "Queen's Irish" of to-day. People, calling themselves patriotic, bow and scrape before them, and journals pretending to be the infallible guides and teachers of a people struggling for freedom, fill their columns with fulsome adulations, and worse, use their all-powerful positions as journalists to throw dust in and dim the eyes that would see in the present pageantries but sorrowful reminiscences of the bitter past. It has been glowingly told us that loyal political addresses have been refused – that Royalty passed on, knowing no parties, etc.

That is all very fine on paper, but let me ask – Dis Royalty pretend to know the people? The most ardent loyal enthusiast cannot answer the affirmative. What attempt has Royalty made

to better the position of the masses, Orang or Green? Echo answers – What? Show us the tailor who can honestly say – my lot is made happier by the Royal visit! What institution for the amelioration of Irish misery has been inaugurated? What benefit has been conferred on the working man? The answers to these questions are palpable; therefore, for what purpose, but the one we have indicated, has the show been run – "The Queen's Irish again. But a truce to Princes and their pageants. In less than a year hence the scattered clans of the Gaedhil shall tread the fields made sacred to memory by the heroic deeds of their forefathers; not in princely retinue, but with freedom's weapons in their hands bravely battling for liberty.

A centaury has passed. The sward has become level above their gory beds. Yet, still they live to breath a soul into sinking nationhood. Wherever a soldier died for Ireland in glorious '98, it is meet and just that his name and fame should be renewed on this the centenary of his noble death. Above his lifeless clay his finger rises and beckons onward to the path he fearlessly trod.

As Slievenamon is the only place in Munster which can claim a part in that fearless struggle, it behoves the people of the province who fear not to speak of it, to again waken up the echoes in the caverns of the old mountain in celebration of the memory of those bold ancestors of ours who shouldered the pike that fatal day on Carrigmoclear and moistened the turf with their hearts' blood. Let these fateful dissensions perish, for the time at least, and let no man know another man's party, while all unite to lay their blood, and amongst the countless number of sacred spots let honour be shown to old Slievenamon.

Musings on Slievenamon.
No. I

By
A Drangan Boy.

Slievenamon-Fion! What memories throng around thy historic name! Looming gracefully amidst the grazed vales of Tipperary, many an ardant eys often gazed on the gloomy outline and drank in with acidity the inspiration which hovers around thee. Mountain of fair women! Those who drank deeply of the ancient love of Erin disagree as thy origin. One calls the the "Mountain of the Women of Fevin," an ancient territory corresponding to a modern barony which stretches beneath thy shadows. Others delve more into the depts of the past and say you took your name from a race of Tuathe-De-Danaan, fair-haired beauties who inhabited thy dells in ages long ago. They tell us that a company of Finn M'Cahill's warriors, as they chased deer along the old mountain sides, once fell under their spells, upon whom enchantresses cast a deep sleep and flung into the caverns of a fairy palace, still pointed out on the eastern shoulder of the hill, there to remain, like others in Innishowen and Kildare, till the real and final struggle for Erin's redemption takes place. 'Tis about time now that Irishmen should forget that the shades of past heroes can give them no further help in this long-fought fight than what the memory of their heroic deeds should inspire. If you wish for freedom, trust yourselves and yourselves alone. All others have axes of their own to grind, and you'll find in the end that turning the whetstone for them shall be a sore and disappointing business.

But to Slievenamon, however its name grew, it still stands, one of those finger posts which dot the long and weary road, travelled in sunshine and storm by those sons of Ireland who have ever bent their steps on the thorny paths of freedom. Many a weary and footsore outlaw found shelter and repose in the lovely caverns of Slievenamon, cared, tendered, and consoled by the fair descendants of those lovely "women of Fevin," who had given it its name. Let us ascend its craggy sides as the cloudless summer sun dispels the haze which lingers over its frowning brow. Step by step as we advance and gaze over the boundless landscape beneath, spot by spot draped over by the halo of historic romance comes into view. The winding Anner croons along its base, made famous by the magic pen of Tipperary's poet-patriot, our illustrious Charles J. Kickham. His ashes mingles with their native clay in the shadow of the old mountain where of the wooed and won that genius which now places him amongst the foremost in our Irish Walhalla. As we stood amongst the thousands who throng by times around his honored sepulchre the spirit of Davis seemed to hover near, and catching it somewhat, our wayward muse burst forth the following refain to:

KICKHAM'S GRAVE

In the valley of Compsey there is a green grave,
Above it the shadows of Slievenamon wave;
A pleasing pall o'er the loved tenant inside,
In the gloom of the mountain, his "darling and pride."
(Full poem in Poetry Section)
Shan Van Vocht May 1st 1896

UCD Digital Library

Musings on Slievenamon.
No. II

By
A Drangan Boy.

Turning from the ruined towers of Mullinahone and looking in another direction, the eye rests on the spires of "rare Clonmel." Memory conjures up the bloody breach where fell, beneath the pikes of Hugh Dhuv O'Neil and his hardy Ulster men, the war-bronzed veterans of the butcher Cromwell. It is not our purpose to enter into any detailed account of the bravery displayed by the gallant fifteen hundred who, under the leadership of this heroic nephew of the noble Owen Roe, held twenty thousand blood-thirsty "Ironsides" at bay for the space of two months. Suffice it to say that when the gutters of Clonmel ran red with the blood of the invaders, as they died in breach and street, and when the discord which prevailed in the councils of the chiefs prevented the arrival of succour, Hugh Dhuv left the town and bent his steps towards his native Tyrone. Had Lords Ormond and Castleconnell waived their etiquette and complied with the instructive request of O'Neil, Cromwell's big army would have been held before Clonmel, harassed by the forces which those two generals could have thrown on his rear. But they failed to agree; the Limerick men stayed at home, and Clonmel was left to its fate.

"'Twas fate, they said, a wayward fate,
Our web of discord wove;
For while our tyrants joined in hate,
We never joined in love."

One hundred years passed away. A century of cruel bigoted persecution devastated the fair plains of Tipperary, and again we are in Clonmel witnessing the cold-blooded murder of an Irish *Soggart Aroon* who ventured to raise his humble voice in defence of his butchered people. In the year 1762, the Marquis of Drogheda's brutal soldiery were out Cromwelling Cromwell through the smoking hamlet of the county, led on by the Maudes and Bagwells of that day, murdered men, burning homesteads, and outraged women marked their paths. For having the temerity to collect money to defend some of his parishioners, whom those fiends. had in prison, Father Sheehy was charged with treason, of which he was acquitted in the King's Bench, Dublin. But the Cromwellians were not to be baffled thus. An indictment charging him with the murder of one Bridge, whom the tyrants had spirited into concealment, was framed, Father Sheehy was re-arrested as he emerged from the Dublin Dock, conveyed a prisoner to Clonmel, and then-"Out of Hell there was no redemption." A cattle-stealer, named Twohey who was taken out of Kilkenny Gaol, and an abandoned woman, named Moll Dunlea, were fitted out for the occasion, and trained to swear his life away, which feat they accomplished on the 13th of March 1766, in the 38th year of his age. Two days afterwards he was executed, along with many other of his relatives, in Clonmel, and his head placed on a spear over the old Gaol of that town, where it bleached in sunshine and shower for twenty long years. His grave, in the Shandraghan old churchyard, is, today, one of the pilgrimage spots in Tipperary, while his persecutors have passed away, remembered only in the execrations of a people whom their diabolical ingenuity was unable to extirpate.

To relieve the mind of the effects of those heart-rending memories, let us turn to the picturesque landscape which lies beneath us in the wooded and watered valleys of Kiltinan and Grove, with the hoary walls of the old town of Fethard in the background. The lover of natural scenery could not bespeak a spot in this or any other land, better calculated to feast his eyes or rouse the bent of his imagination, be he poet, painter, or romancer. The birds sing as sweetly to-day, amongst the "banks and braes" of these secluded vales, as they did on that traditional day many centuries ago, when the three monks, who went forth for a stroll through its shady bowers, from their monastery of Kilmaclough, the ruins of which you may still discern amongst the trees, and beneath the spell of bird music fell into a sleep which lasted 300 years. Dr. Joyce tells the tale better than we could attempt it; let us point out the scene to the tourist who visits old Slievenamon and be done with it.

Farther afield the hoary pile on Cashel's far-famed "Rock" meets the eye, the Cistercian abbey of Holy Cross lying low beside the silvery Suir, a few miles due east from this world-known ruin. With the aid of a moderate telescope, you can easily discern the village. of Cullen and the old tower of Ballyneety, where Sarsfield surprised William's battering train, and left it in fragments scattered o'er the plain. We can also explore "the old marble town of Kilkenny, with its abbeys, cathedrals, and halls," look into the port of Waterford, and see the noble estuary of the "sister rivers," Barrow, Suir, and Nore as they empty themselves into the sea.

Wherever the eye rests, feudal keeps stand gray and lonely, which once kept watch and ward over broad domains, when the rightful lords held sway, and native chiefs donned visor and hauberk as they proudly rode forth to repel the rapacious invader and fight for happy homes and altars free. Seldom, if ever had one of these struggles which have marked the long centuries of Ireland's unending grapple with the common foe, taken place, but Slievenamon has had a share in it. The decaying bones and rusty weapons still being unearthed. in the pits and quarries around, recall those fierce and bloody days when the broadsword alone, was the only tenure of his ancestors' heritage. And the last flame which blazed forth from the smouldering of the past, oft brilliantly illuminated the slopes of the fair mountain, as Colour-Sergeant M'Carthy met the "boys" by moonlight on its heather-spangled sides to impart to them, not alone the enthusiasm which animated himself, but the physical science which soldiers know is a necessary preparation for the hopes which inspire them.

Amongst the countless memories old Slievenamon awakes, the fray and foray, chief and outlaw, our closing theme must be:

The Moonlight Drill

Deep silence reigned o'er Anner vales, no sound disturbed the air
The rustic swains, in healthy sleep, found rest from toil and care,
The warbling tenants of the grove in calm repose were still,
As first we trod old Slievenamon to join the moonlight drill.

(Full poem in Poetry Section)

Musings on Slievenamon.
No. III

By
A Drangan Boy.

Somebody has said that "liberty dwells on the mountains." I would fain believe that somebody to have been correct. The mountains of every land have invariably been the home of the heroes who have never basked contented beneath the cloud of slavery but have tried and struggled until the sun of victory, in most cases, has crowned their efforts with his effulgent glow. Although many centuries have passed since the sun had gilded the summit of Slievenamon, yet, in every epoch of Ireland's struggle, its hardy sons have been conspicuous, not alone for their patriotism, but for the readiness with which they have embraced every weapon to havoc in the fray. Failure came, but defeat, never. Much the same can be said of every mountain from Wicklow to Galway; from Innishowen to Carbery, but we are now musing on Slievenamon, and therefore confined to its shadows past and present. Shadows which fell on the struggles of Firbolg, Tuata-De-Danaans, Milesian, Dane, Norman, and Saxon, fighting for supremacy; shadows which still fall on the self-same conflict, handed down from sire to son, and destined to continue in varying forms, and with varying weapons, until Ireland shall regain that which the Saxon robbed her of, oftener and more effectually by fraud than by force.

All of us who handle the pen to write of Ireland, are too much given to "Sunbustry," "The finest peasantry, gallant Tipperary," and all that. What nonsense! We are, surely, a fine people for colonising the world; building mighty empires in other lands, but always expecting somebody else to fight for our own. True, that generation by generation, we have made the attempt, but it is also true that readily as we grasp the weapons at hand, and right heartily as we enter on the campaign, as readily do we throw them by sink into apathy or exchange them for some plausible *ignis fatuus* thrown across our path. This proves our lack of that tenacity necessary in nations as in individuals, to achieve any great purpose. And what greater achievement can a people attain than their liberty! But *waydy-buckety* movements like ours never reach that happy goal.

Standing today on the very boulder from which Cromwell is said to have surveyed the same scene of pastoral beauty, two hundred and forty-six years ago, and which drew from his iron heart the exclamation "This is a land worth fighting for," the thought arises that those who have got this favoured land as their part of the gift of Divine Providence haven't fought for it as they ought. Fine peasantry! Brave people! Bah! Truly, we are fine and brave. But it is not on the battle-field alone liberty has been always won. The greater evil of our bravery is that in far foreign fields it has too often been displayed. Look at the many other peoples who have no Fontenoys or Frederichsburgs on their banners, how they have stuck to the passes of their native land, and held them in storm and stress, until eventually the goddess of freedom reached forth her hand and presented them with the laurel crown. Even they cannot point to Benburbs, Yellow fords, Pass of Plumes, and many others which cast a sort of halo over the dark pages of our history, yet they can point to the glorious consummation of all – freedom and we are eclipsed.

From musing to moralising is a short journey, indeed. We often catch ourselves hastening along the road, and pull up asking the question – what of your premises and conclusions? And our mentor answers – they are all our own, and the outcome of a long and close acquaintance with the subjects we inwardly discuss and digest. We have invariably found Irish people in every movement with which we have had any connexion, inviting deception, so to speak, by the way they bow to balderdash and swallow showers of bosh, enough to sicken and dishearten honest-thinking patriots. They can be gulled by the glamour of oratory into fancying themselves wingless angles, destined by persecution for some important niche in order of creation. This gullibility produces in turn a crop of clever patriots, to whom self is all and country noting but what can be made out of it in favour of this self.

To attain the goal of freedom requires a deeper and more staple moral force than this "sunbustry," behind whatever weapons may be in vogue for the occasion. This "shut your eyes and open your mouth" system should have been played out long, long ago. Ourselves, and ourselves alone, must achieve our liberty. And it is time that we should recognise it. Hero worships that is the worship of live heroes – must be done away with. Let us bow to no leaders who would make our bodies only stepping-stones to place and prestige for themselves, regardless of our pains and sufferings. The true leader is yet to come, but we can be preparing his path and smoothing his way. Our history lies around us. Every cavern in this old mountain is a page in our chequered history. Every spot on which the eye rests, as we gaze before us, conjures a thought of the should-be living past. Something attempted, something lost, and something won for Ireland, can be traced on every moss-grown stone of this boundless panorama.

"For here gathered stout hearts in brave ninety-eight,
Undaunted and wiling grim death to await."

And here in forty-eight, was the wild clarion of war sounded again, while the men of sixty-five repaired there also to rouse the enthusiasm of Tipperary and get it into line. We are some of those who believe that those times, those scenes, those men should not be forgotten; and now that the centenary of ninety-eight shall be approaching in a few years, we hope to see the men of Tipperary assemble on Slievenamon to celebrate and venerate the memory of those proud sires of the "gallant" county 'who rose in dark and evil days to right their native land;" to proclaim to the world that the blaze they kindled has not expired; that the national spark, despite defeat, despair and disgrace, is still vitally extant and ready at any moment to be fanned in defence of life, liberty and native land. The battlefields of our country are its national monuments. On them the nobility of the nation perished, and on them they should be commemorated. The heads that adorned the battlements of the old keep of Mullinahone must not be allowed to wither in oblivion. Their story must be told, and generations after them inspired by the lesson it contains. A long century has passed since their native turf drank up their blood, and when they shall be forgotten, then, and not till then, shall our hopes of freedom be dead.

"So here's their memory: may it be to us a shining light,
To cheer our strife for liberty, and teach us to unite.
Through good and ill be ireland's still,
Tho' sad as theirs your fate,
And true men be you men,
Like those of 'Ninety-eight.'

Shan Van Vocht September 4th 1896

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An Episode of ‘98

By

A Drangan Boy.

'Tis Autumn, 1798. A dark pall of sorrow hung over the land. The blood of its best and bravest drenched many a hillside, while gibbet and convict ship groaned 'neath their loads of human sacrifice. Hopes of foreign aid, which hitherto had buoyed up many a patriotic breast, were killed at Ballinamuck where the gallant Humbert was captured; while those who rallied to the blaze on Slievenamon were fugitives amongst the caverns of the Comeraghs, with the head of poor Norton grinning on a spike o'er the battlements of the old castle of Mullinahone. No Davis had been amongst the people at that time, to sing to them of "self-reliance". Consequently, Tipperary would not rise to the call and join in with gallant Wexford, until the tidings came that the green flag and tricolour were flying together over Killala Bay. The "races of Castlebar" was the theme of many a fireside tale in every Munster vale, and in none more than in that valley 'neath Slievenamon, where dwelt Bryan Purcell, with his son, James, and their kinswoman, Mary.

Bryan Purcell had the good fortune to rent a snug farm from a considerate Land Lord - one who resided and spent his income amongst his tenantry - who felt their sorrows and shared their joys. Alas! the 'troubles' came. Sides were taken, and old Bryan, with the wisdom of three-score - and - ten settled on his brow, deprecating revolutionary ideas, 'inspired by the French headsman, as he used to say, took that of his Landlord, but all his inducements could not prevail on his son, James, to join that gentleman's yeomanry corps, then formed in the neighbourhood. Agents of the "United Irishmen" and French emissaries found their way, from time to time, along the valley of the Suir to Clonmel, and James had become acquainted with what was then believed to have been Bonapartes intentions towards Ireland. Thus it was, that when news from Killala arrived, he got ready to repair to Slievenamon, believing that the invincible captain meant to strike at England at last, particularly, as his every stroke meant victory then. Consequently, he prepared to attend the summons on Slievenamon and was proceeding thither when he met Shemus Ruadh, the Landlord's factotum - bailiff, gamekeeper, etc - a class of person found on every property then as well as now, who informed him that the yeoman had charged, that the insurgents were dispersed, and that many awaited execution at the hands of their brutal foes.

Shemus Ruadh, red Jim M'Ivers, was a worthy specimen of his class - a crawling, cringing knave, a tyrant to his fellows, but a crouching sycophant to his superiors. Bryan Purcell stood in high esteem with his master, therefore, Shemus toadied to him, and pretended, at least, to let no opportunity of befriending, him pass by unavailed of. With a sinister leer on his evil face, he accosted our hero, and taking the dhudeen (a constant facial adornment of his) from capacious mouth, said - 'Begor James, the rebellion is over. The yeos are chasing the rebels right, left and centre. The Master gave orders this mornin' to have no man steer out o' the work undher pain o' instant arrest whin caught. A hatter, named Norton and some others are in the guardroom beyant.' Patronisingly he whispered - 'Fortunately, James you wasn't up in time. Your blood is up, I know. The Frinch is landed ; but the Masther tould us that they have

surrendered, an' are all prisners o' war, and he smacked his lips and inserted the dhudeen between them again.

James Purcell made no reply, but turned round and appeared to be on the look out for rabbits, one of which he fired at soon after, without hurt to the rodent, as his heart was full ; his brain and his hands trembled, which he didn't wish the lynx-eyes of Shemus Ruadh to perceive. After cooling his boiling excitement for a considerable time in the open air, he returned home, and found Mary, who, alone, knew where he had gone, in such a stupor by the parlour fire that scarcely heeded his entrance until he spoke. Recovering herself possession soon after his appearance, she burst into a flood of tears, which she dried up just as quickly with her apron, and sobbingly exclaimed "James! James!" "What is the matter, Mary?" He questioned. "Has anything happened to father, or what?" "no, no," she replied, "but oh! The strain of the last four hours; and when Shemus Ruadh came in an hour ago and told us all was over on the hill, and many rebels, as he called them, captured, my poor brain reeled, and oh! the effort to keep my excitement from that penetrating inquisitive glance of his well nigh killed me. Father and himself went over to the master's to learn the result: and how I trembled lest he should find you there a prisoner. Now, that you are safe at home again, James promise me, at least for poor father's sake, that you will never give me cause for such anxiety in the future."

James took her hand, whose trembling vibrations sent a corresponding thrill through his own frame, as he answered that he might safely give that promise if the news received were true. In reply to further queries, he told the timid girl that he had met no one on the way but Shemus Ruadh, and to him he pretended that he had been looking for a shot at rabbits. This information seemed to set her a bit at ease as she entertained a very strong aversion to Shemus, lately heightened, we presume by that person's familiar attention towards her. It needed an effort on our post to enlighten the general reader on the forward peculiarities of persons of his class. Possessed of ample means, secured by his insidious circumlocutory power of prying into secrets of captain Sackwell's tenants, and employing whatever he could turn to their disadvantage as a mirror of verronism before them, he made bold strides towards obtaining Miss Purcell's favour, and was always and everywhere firmly, but courteously, repulsed.

Mary Purcell was the daughter of a kinsman of old Bryan Purcell, who carried on the business in the town of Clonmel, and, her fortune, secured in Riall's Bank, Clonmel, and the knowledge of this, we believe served very much to intensify James M'Lvers passion for her. Mammon was his, God, and he adored it in whatever way it would smile best upon him. It was not until James and Mary had grown to the age of man and womanhood, that he learnt that they were not brother and sister, nor for that matter very closely related. They had been reared together; had shared each other's little joys and sorrows, more fraternally, perhaps than if they had been thus connected. But with advancing years, other vistas opened on their imaginations, which occasioned some reserve, but relationship eventually grew into what is known as love. Both were young and ardent, their passion was pure, and enjoying the pleasure of one and other's company, they sighed for nothing more, nor had they any reason to quarrel with fate, till the 'trouble' came, and with it Shemus Ruadh's mad infatuation for Mary. That worthy, able as he was to put two and two together, chuckled with delight over the thought that he had the Purcells in his power at last owing to his chance meeting with James bearings his gun towards Slievenamon on the day of the 'ruction' there, as he called it, they having been the only family on the estate who stood clear of his terrors up to that. After

using all his wiles and threats for Miss Purcell's smiles which he failed to obtain, he began pumping the "Master', and found that rabid as that gentleman was on treasonable matters, he could not use him to the detriment of the Purcells.

Having made out so much, he set about in other directions, and found his way to an officer of the Clonmel garrison named Engleton whom he made acquainted in his own way, with what he knew, not failing to omit their landlords interest in them, and his aversion to be personally concerned in their injury. Captain Engleton waited on Captain Sackwell and learned that part of the schemer's story at least was correct, in as much as he found that the Purcells enjoyed his (Sackwells) high regard and esteem.

Christmas was coming on apace. The old-time custom of the yule log was an honoured one at Brian Purcell's. For generations past the log blazed on his hospitable hearth, while good cheer and innocent amusement flowed in abundance round the guests there assembled to do honour to its master and welcome the great festival near at hand. Shemus Ruadh repulsed beyond recall by Mary set his demon ingenuity at work to ruin the family, hoping that in their fall circumstances would place the girl in his power. Engleton was one of those English soldiers who believe that to conquer Ireland properly it is necessary that Irishmen should be extirpated root and branch. Alas how many of its kind has it been Ireland's hard fortune to have met since Strongbow's mailed warriors first secured a foothold on her picturesque shores; yet, they failed - failed miserably as today they are nowhere, and Ireland is still there quick and vigorous as ever!

But we cannot linger moralising this way. Time is flying and Shemas's plots are maturing. Having won Engleton to the belief that a nest of rabels were secreted as Brian Purcell's it was decided and finally resolved that the dragoons would visit the place on Christmas Eve because the arch-traitor was aware of the customary "yule-log" gathering whose cheer he had often partaken of, and consequently he surmised that a party of the neighbours would be there as usual, which would answer well enough his information to Engleton. Christmas Eve had come, but the disturbed state of the times had together with a hint from Captain Sackwell, determined old Purcell to forego for once the ancient custom of his house, and though the yule-log burned on his hearthstone no goodly company made merry around it on that occasion. But was profiteth it him his wisdom and peaceful disposition when the self-seeking informer was abroad! Chaos reigned rampant in society, and from such discord those vile creatures to draw sustenance

Old Bryan, his son James and foster daughter Mary, together with a couple of servants sat around the blazing log, awaiting the hour that would herald the coming of 'man's redemption, when, lo! the dogs bay loudly, and the tramp of horses' hoofs. and jingle of military accoutrement's awaken the peaceful echoes of the night.

Just fancy - we cannot describe their consternation when a troop of dragoons filed into the yard and 'formed before the door, while some wheeled round to the rere. Striking the door with his whip, Captain Engleton demanded admittance which was answered by old Bryan, opening the door, and standing in the passage asked to what he owed the honour of such a visit at such an hour and on such a night. The officer inquired whom he had inside and ordered their instance surrender. The old man replied "My house contains no person captain but it's lawful inmates." " You should have been in your bed at this unseemly hour, sir. It ill

becomes a greyhead like you to be astir so late. It bodes nothing unfavourable for your good and peaceful disposition."

"This is Christmas Even captain - a night we usually honour by waiting the hour which ushered in man's guise and form the Great Creator and Redeemer of the World. Our ways are peaceable as the master, his honour Captain Sackwell can testify.

"Lo h-h with Captain Sackwell old rebel." hissed a grumpy looking sergeant who spurring up to the door and bending over his horse rolled his hand in the poor old man's hoary locks and pulled him across the threshold-stone and out the yard. Some troopers instantly dismounted and gathered around him, when, with a wild, unearthly scream, Mary rushed between them and her father, as she called him, with hands extended in an attitude of warding impending blows off his venerable head.

"Hold on there, men," exclaimed the captain. "D-a you don't you see the lovely vision! You have no eyes for beauty, dogs." And he sprung off his charger, and handing the reins to the man next him, clasped an arm round Mary's waist and attempted to kiss her. Her cry again rang our weird and wild on the midnight air, and ere it died on the echoes of the breeze. Captain Engleton lay sprawling in the gutter, felled by a well-directed blow on his temple from James Purcell's right arm. Then there was commotion fierce and free.

A dozen swards were out of their scabbards in a twinkling. That valiant array of armed men were on their mettle in a minute, because a young man dared defend his more than sister from insult, and his aged father from bodily injury.

Oh, Heavens poor Ireland! how terrible hast thou been persecuted! But let us not linger. A dozen arms were around James Purcell before he could well take in the situation, with their sprawling captain shouting - Flog him! flog him!

"All right captain", alacrity responded the out-lookin sergeant referred to. "How many lashes?" "Fifty, you dog, and be quick." No need for further orders. The instruments of torture, which were quickly got ready, and James Purcell was speedily strapped up to a heeled cart in his father's yard, while a burly trooper was called out of the ranks to ply the whip - a call he so aptly responded to that (we must chronicle the fact, however distasteful to valiant soldiers it may be) his alacrity showed how pleasing the performance was to him.

While James was undergoing the degrading punishment, Mary slipped away in the confusion and Irish-like her thoughts in trouble, flew to the parish Priest, to whose dwelling she spied with almost superhuman strength and fleetness. Father O'Donnell was just preparing to celebrate the "midnight Mass" in secret seclusion, when her wild cries attracted his attention, and as he permitted her to enter, he saw that reason had altogether fled its tenement, and his gentle protege, whom he delighted in for her purity and goodness entered his home on this holy Christmas night a raving maniac. All he could gather from her delirious expressions was "Soldiers were at her father's" Thither he prepared to go with that prompt fearless which has ever been a striking characteristic of the Irish *soggarth aroon* whenever danger threatens even the least member of his flock. When Captain Engleton saw James secured and no further bodily fear from that quarter, he ordered that Mary be brought forward for his will and pleasure again. The only groan that passed James Purcell's lips under the lash was when he

heard that order given with no earthly power in him to prevent it, while too poor of Bryan it was the "last straw", and he fell in an unconscious heap where he stood.

Mary could not be found, and in the madness of disappointed vengeance, orders were given that the roof be fired to afford light for further search, as well as to "burn the old rebels nest". There, in the glare of his burning homestead James Purcell underwent the torture of England's knout, and for what? For what man is honoured the civilised world over, aye, and even amongst savages - the protection of helpless woman from insult and outrage.

What it was that prompted Captain Engleton to lift the blind in his bedroom window, and gaze into the night ere he retired, on this particular occasion, or whether such was usual to him, shall never be known, but as he did so he beheld a glare like lightening ascending over the little hill which separated his place from the part of his property which he had let to tenenants. He quickly descended the stairs and proceeded to the guardroom where he ordered a dozen horses saddled immediately. And with a dozen of his yeomen in the saddles he set off at a gallop for the scene of the fire. As he reached the top of the hill he saw Bryan Purcell's farmhouse illumining the scene. With an oath he spurred forward, and arrived just as the grimy trooper, before alluded to, was administering the last strokes of the fifty lashes ordered to James Purcell for the heinous crime of defending his intended wife from worse than death.

The glare of the burning buildings cast their weird halo around, so that a glance sufficed to show how things stood.

"What is all this about?" questioned Captain Sackwell, at the top of his voice, as he rode into the yard. "Flagging a rebel, captain", answered Englaton, who had the audacity to strike me just a minute ago as I was doing my duty to King and country.

"Unbind him - be quick!" vociferated Sackwell. "Where is old Purcell? - Surely he's no rebel!" A search was then made, and old Bryan was found bleeding from mouth and ears, as he had been trampled on in in the confusion.

Just then Father O'Donnell entered the premises, and to his care the poor old man was consigned, amidst the ribald scoffs and jeers of the soldiery. The poor Priest was none too soon as in his arms the innocent soul of Bryan Purcell winged its flight to its maker, there to tell another tale of Ireland's sufferings, and beseech the Most High to look with pity on our unhappy land. The only words that escaped James Purcell's lips were, as he was released from the cart-wheel – "Engleton, if ever we meet in a fair fight, look out for me!"

Christmas morning had dawned. The angelic choirs were singing, "Peace on earth to men of good will," but there lay old Bryan Purcell in his "winding sheet," trampled to death 'neath the hoofs of Engleton's chargers, the accumulation of his years' toil a heap of ashes, his more than daughter a raving maniac; his son writhing in pain.

(Tom Ryan also wrote a poem titled, 'Remember Mary Purcel' which can be found in the poetry section)

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The Old House in the Glen.
(The School Near Slievenamon)

Real scenes of life before me now
Are shifting one by one;
Each actor plays his part and goes,
But when each act is done,
Old mem'ries hover 'round me,
And I'm a boy again;
On Fancy's wings I'm borne to
The Old House in the Glen.

Oh, sweet the retrospection of
The happy days of yore,
When by the crystal stream I play'd,
That ripples past the door,
With Johnny, James and Mary Anne
A bright-eye'd colleen then,
Oh, how we wished "the fairies took"
The Old House in the Glen!

Where are they now, Companions of
Those happy bygone years,
When youthful breasts were troubled not
With world's hopes and fears?
No cares were ours but romp and play
Oh, we were happy then,
We dreaded but t"he master" of
The Old House in the Glen.

One where Ohio's waters roll
Has found an exiles grave ;
Another rests his weary head
Beneath Atlantic's wave -
And Mary Anne is by me yet,
As fresh and fair as when
Together oft we hurried to
The Old House in the Glen.

The house is crumbling into ruin,
The "master's" dead and gone;
The ivied trees are standing still,
The river rushes on,
No more upon its verdant banks,
At midday's heard the ring
Of merry cherub voices from
The Old House in the Glen.

NFCS 0556: 285-287, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary. Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

My Schoolboy Days.

My schoolboy days!
what pleasant tunes,
Float on my memory.
Elysian of a happy past!
When I remember thee ;
What mingling joys and sorrows
The retrospect affords,
Of fun and merrymaking of
Blest childhood's happy Sports

Alas! such times are vanished now
And vividly appears,
The stern, blood reality
Of far maturer years ;
The world's care now takes the place
Of frolic, fun, and mirth,
And Maggie ban asthore you
To that care gave birth.

My darling blue-eyed maiden
Ere you I first had seen,
I roamed as free as mountain deer
O'er hills and valleys green,
Attracted by your 'trancing form,
I never shall see more
By you my heart first fettered was
My Maggie ban asthore.

But since that time another love
As fair in every form,
Has won my heart, for her it beats
Every degree as warm ;
My all, my life for I'd give and
If I could give more
To snap your rusty fetters free
My Erin green asthore

'Tis true my love - my Erin green
With fetters you are crowned ;
Visited by famine while
Glad plenty stalks around ;
Your lifeblood ebbing quickly
O'er stormy ocean's foam,
To build the wealth of other lands
With muscle, blood, and bone.

But soon, I hope on Erin green

The happy day shall smile,
When peace and plenty once again
Shall crown our storied ide,
When man to man shall brother be
Forgetting clan and creed,
Then harmony shall light to fame
The glory of the deed.

NFCS 0556: 343-345, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

The Valley Below.

'Tis a valley in Erin - the theme of my song,
Lay me down 'neath its shades, and time rushes along.
On wings of delight , oh, how pleasant to know;
A bower to repose in this valley below.

'Tis a valley in Erin - I rambled its paths,
Its meadows and gardens by streamlets and raths.
I rush from the revel in evening's suns glow,
To have a quiet stroll through this valley below.

There's a rose in the valley - the queen of its flowers,
A fairer ne'er graced old Acadia's bowers,
Of mine were the wreath where this floweret would blow,
I'd bless when I stray'd thro' this valley below

Roll on little river! - sing on thro' this vale!
Seek an arbour and lay there a love-laden tale,
You heard in the gloaming neath twilights faint glow,
From a youth who oft stray'd thro' this valley below.

'Tis a valley in Erin - that old land can boast,
Of many a vale like an Eden almost,
Where nature reposing to wander is slow,
Wrapped up in her charms in this valley below.

Tho' I sing of its beauties if one flower was blown,
It's other delights would to me be unknown,
But while, by its bed yonder rivulets flow,
I'll stray by their banks throw this valley below.

I know a River Clear.
(Air-Aileen Aroon)

I know a river clean
Flowing thro a vale,
I know a fair one near,
Pride of the dale,
Oh how that rivers croon
Chanting its weird old time
Morning and night and noon
Swells on my ear.

Often in though I stray
Down by its side,
Often in dreams I play
By its clear tide.
Happy the dreams that bring
Light of that watching thing.
Gay as wild flowers in Spring
Sportine and wild.

Rivulet! ripple on,
Sing her thy time,
Sing her in passioned song!
Tell her the tale you heard,
When scarce a ripple stirrd
Save of some passing bird
Seeking its home.

Nine be the to feel,
Lord for the maid,
Nine be the pain to feel,
It is betray.
Oh! happy the day shall be,
Bringing new life to me
Crowned by her constancy
One we are made.

NFCS 0556: 272-273, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary. Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

The Cot upon the Hill.

I've watched the brilliant sun go down,
On many a foreign strand;
I've ranged the flowery scenes among
Of many a sunny land;
Where Northern lights in glory shine,
I've seen strange sights but still,
My vile heart never wandered from
The Cot upon the Hill.

Within our own sea-girted isle,
There's many a lovely spot,
Well worthy of the poet's theme,
By nature's hand begot,
Beside Lough Lene's fairy lake
I've felt my pulses thrill
But never do they throb as in
The Cot upon the Hill.

September 1875

NFCS 0556: 320-321, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

The Moon-Light Drill.

Deep silence reign o'er Compsy's vale, no sound disturbed the air,
The rustic swains, in healthy sleep, found rest from toil and care,
The warbling tenants of the grove in calm repose were still,
When first we trod old Slievenamon to join the moonlight drill.

“Fall in - dress up - keep heads erect, and look to your full height,
To learn the soldiers gallant trade, I’ve brought you here tonight,”
Sang out our Captain, Rory Oge, a red Coat clasped him too,
But never throbbed in manly breast an Irish heart more true.

The moon, pursuing her aerial course, looked smiling on us down,
As front and rere, and left and right, we tramped the heather brown;
Sweet zephyrs playing round us seemed to whisper, “bravo men !
Loved freedom’s shout, o’er Slievenamon, shall echo soon again.”

Many a mountain peak gleams high and river rolls between,
The gallant hearts who trod that night the moonlight mountain scene;
But never died our cherished hopes, they burn as fiercely still,
As when we trod old Slievenamon to join the moonlight drill.

And Rory Oge was done to death in dungeons o'er the main,
While glow of Summer's glory lights up Slievenamon again;
But gallant men yet tread the sides of that old storied hill,
Who’d gladly tramp its heather brown to join the Moonlight Drill."

The Fenain Scout.

A harvest moon was sailing over Compsey's storied vale;
The scent of new-mown meadows sweet was wafted on the gale;
The sheep-bells ceased to tinkle, which bespoke the flocks at rest,
As daylight's doors were closing in the far-off golden west.

A challenge broke the stillness and awoke the echoes round,
(I stood within the shadows of a tree-clad, sloping mound);
"Come forth and give the pass-word, lad," and turning right about,
I saw before me, fearless stand, a daring Fenian scout.

I whispered "Slievenamon", and then she shook me by the hand-
"The boys are gathering on the hill and you must understand,
No persons are admitted there but those who are all right";
"McCarthy's come from town," she said, "to drill ye all tonight."

I crossed the weir, went up the hill, and with my comrades stood;
O, memory ! how can I sing the thoughts that o'er me flood.
I close my eyes and see again our columns move about,
And hear the stirring challenge of our daring Fenian scout.

Ah, many years have gone since, and I'm almost alone;
The gallant men I met that night today are scarcely known –
Some rest their last in native earth, and some in foreign lands,
Their glazing eyes were closed in death by stranger's heedless hands.

But, Ireland ! you're not conquered yet, their spirit still remains,
And hovers o'er your famous hills and sunlit verdant plains.
Your daughters fair are Irish still, and if the boys go out
Amongst them can be found again a daring Fenian scout !

Norton of Mullinahone.
(An Episode of ’98)

Bright red shone the sun that fair autumn evening,
The valley of Compsey lay calmly at rest,
The sickle was idle, tho’ golden grain teeming,
In richest profusion bent down its ripe crest,
Oh, where are the milkmaids who tripped o’er the flowers?
What has silenced the songs they once raised in the bowers –
Sweet lays of the days when our Island was ours,
And the wassail bowl flowed in the halls of the free?

Oh, why do the reapers speed on to the mountain,
Slievenamon the historic, whose peak is ablaze
With flames playing high as if shot from a fountain ?
On what are those maidens directing their gaze?
In green garments clad a tall form is wending
His way down the vale where the river is bending
Around yonder hillock, his steps scarcely rending
The shamrock’s soft leaflets – so lithesome is he.

‘Tis Norton the brave, the patriot – hearted !
Who hastes to the hills for his country to strike;
The sun’s setting rays ere the last beam departed
Just lingered a moment to glance on his pike.
Oh, whence comes this wild wail so sad and despairing,
Like the Banshee foretelling thy fate, hapless Erin?
‘Tis Norton’s own true love his last farewell bearing
To the home and the kindred he’ll never see more.

Oh, why did you slumber so long, Tipperary,
Till Wexford and Wicklow were laid in their gore?
On Fame’s tented fields you had never been chary,
But always in battle struck on to the fore.
On Slievenamon, then, your old courage undaunted,
You showed you were ready to prove whene’re wanted,
But the maids of Slieveardagh were left lone to chant it,
And chorus the winds with lost love’s “ullagone.”

In the valley of Compsey an old keep is looming –
Its crumbling grey walls fast bespeaking decay,
Where the sons of St. John in the fair distant gloaming
Looked out o’er the vale in their chivalrous day;
What spectre is that o’er the battlements bending ?
From its gaunt, sightless orbs are weird shadows descending,
Defiance and hate ‘neath its gory locks blending,
‘Tis the head of poor Norton of Mullinahone !

Daniel Norton was shot in July 1798, and his head was impaled on a spike on St. John’s Castle, Mullinahone. The spike was sent as an historical relic to the Chicago Fenian Fair in 1864.

Slievenamon.

Old hill! beneath whose somber shade
I've spent my youthful years,
Upon your sides I often gaze,
Oppressed with hopes and fears;
With hopes you may at no far day
Fair freedom's mantle don-
And fears that I should from you fly
Oh loved old Slievenamon!

So many pleasant rambles,
Beneath your towering brow.
I had with school companions,
Who far are from you now;
In the stormy deep some of them sleep,
Some on Antietam's field,
Faced shot and shell, and bravely fell,
Their adopted flag to shield.

When childhood's days and boyhood's years,
Are ripening into prime,
To such a better livelihood,
I'm forced for to resign,
Your heath-clad sides which oftentimes,
In pleasure I roved on,
My paths to trace thro' prairie wastes,
Oh loved old Slievenamon.

When I'm beneath the "Stars and Stripes"
In the "Land of Liberty"
Where labour is rewarded and
Trade grows flourishingly,
I'll work and pray that freedom may,
Soon cast its rays among,
Your caves and raths and craggy paths,
Oh loved old Slievenamon.

NFCS 0556: 340-342, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary. Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

Neill of Slievenamon.

Throughout old Compsey's storied vale
His prowess was well known
At hurling or at wrestling or
To push the heavy stone.
But dancing at the cross-roads in
The summer evenings long
No one could foot the jig and reel
like Neill of Slievenamon.

And woe betide the bold bodagh
Who'd rouse the sleeping ire,
Which lay far down within his breast
Like slumbering forest fire.
To hiss and flame if fann'd to life
And rush as fiercely on,
Where foeman dared to cross the path
Of Neill of Slievenamon.

And he could lisp the Blarney sweet
When wooing Mary Ban,
And be as tender in his love
As sucking dove or fawn
But when the squire bestowed his smiles
To lure her heart along,
Ah, then the passion-prison burst
In Neill of Slievenamon.

One evening on the mountain side
Young Mary strayed alone,
Plucking wild flowers by the path,
Led to the trysting stone
The squire forgot his gun and dog,
As Mary crooned a song,
And pressed his suit to gain the place
Of Neill of Slievenamon

Like timid hare or frightened deer,
She fled from his embrace
And met his lover hastening to
The well known meeting place.
Amongst the rocks weired echoes there
His anger did prolong,
As felled to earth the squire lay
By Neill of Slievenamon.

Ah! those dark and cruel days;
No more in Comspey vale,
At hurling match or cross road dance

Was seen our brave O'Neill
His paths were now and outlaw's
He raised his arm strong
To shield the honour of his love,
Did Neill of Slievenamon

But soon the emerald banner waved
O'er Ross and Wexford town
And Irish valour once again
Had proved its own renown.
The squire before him bit the dust
And looked his last upon
His life-blood dripping off the pike
Of Neill of Slievenamon

Alas! he fell at Vinegar
And o'er his lifeless clay
A yeoman spear'd his Mary Ban
Beside her love she lay
And still around the cottage hearths
Is told in tale and song
The loving deeds, the daring deeds
Of Neill of Slievenamon

NFCS 0556: 214-218, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary. Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

The Songs Our Fathers Sung.

Sing us the songs our fathers sung
When Erin's sons were free,
The harp upon her banner shone -
Guard of her ministrelsy -
And chieftans sat below her bards
In rows of man and keep,
While vassals crowded lordly halls
And wassail bowls flowed deep.

They sang us not the "la - di - das"
Our modern ballrooms know -
The insipid themes our courtly dames
Now lisp in gas-light glow;
They of it no lordly vices nor
Plebian blades pass'd o'er,
But smote the one, and th'other sung
To music's richest store.

They sing us now those olden songs
Full of poetic fires,
And let them fan the spark that sleeps
In ashes of our sires -
The spark that Britain's might has fail'd
To quench, they set aglow
And keep alive till streams of dark
Oppression cease to flow.

They tell us how our "Sunburst" blazed
O'er many a bloody field,
As downward went the foreign flag
And foes were forced to yield,
How Irish valour woo'd and won
Those peerless maids of old,
Whose worth begot our cherished fame
Enshrined in green and gold.

Childhood's Irish Home.

Thro' flowery scenes 'neath sunny skies,
Let restless spirits stray,
And mingle 'mong the joyous throng,
In fair lands far away.
For glittering dross, let merchants
cross
The stormy billows foam,
Than those more blest, Oh let me rest
In childhoods Irish Home.

I've heard the charms of foreign chimes
In song and story told;
I've heard how foreign cities' streets,
Are paved with shining gold;
I've heard described the orient-sky
That mantles o'er old Rome -
Avaunt! Away! Oh, let me stay
In Childhood's Irish Home.

The melting beauty I have read
of Andalusian maids,
of how they can be woo'd and won
Beneath their olive shades;
Tho' they are gay, Oh, let them stay!
They tempt me not to roam,
Far more I prize two mild blue eyes
In childhood's happy home.

I've read how Bruce and Wallace stood
'Mong Scotland's happy fens,
And hurled the ruthless tyrant Lorde
From out her mountain glens,
If such fire would you inspire
There's Emmet and Wolf Tone.
To nerve your feats to daring deeds
In Childhood's Happy Home.

March 1876

NFCS 0556: 347-349, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

Remember Mary Purcell.
(An Episode of Nintey Eight)

The moon peep'd out from 'neath a cloud
And o'er the woodland still,
Threw forth her borrowe'd brillancy.
On valley plain and hill;
Old Slievenamon stood sentinel.
Like some grey giant old -
What tales of dark and daring can
It's heart brown sides enfold.

The Anner rippled at its base
Saving a moss-crown'd shore,
By plundered homes and ruined shrines
It's course wends evermore.
The farmyard dop, their nighty watch
Were keeping by each byre,
Hark! listen to their howlings drear
Their notes are rising higher.

Amid the stilness of the scene
Along the silent road,
Is heard the tramp of troopers' feet
No tidings good they bode.
Brian Purcell's farmyard is reached
"Halt" cried their leader stern
"Alight" surround the domicille
Escape not let a Kern.

Burst open in a twinkling wide
Is Brian Purcell's door
And England's ruffian soldiers red
Are standing on the floor
"Are James and John inside old man."
your pike heads give to me.
With that before I go I would
Your daughter Mary see.

"No pikeheads doth my house contain
My children are in bed."
But brutal hands are tangled in Brian Purcell's hoary head.
He's dragged across the threshold stone
And out into the yard.
When Mary rushes in between
Their savage blows to ward.

"Hold" ! Hold" bawled out the officer
"Hold on until I taste

This charming creatures ruby lips - Oh Heaven! what a peast"!
So saying he took her by the waist
And strove to throw her down.
When furiously her brothers fist
Is planted on his crown.

In a moment was that brother seized
His hands and feet were bound,
With fifty crimson stripes
Left in his gore upon the ground.
He bore the torture patiently
And not a word said he,
But "If we chance to meet again, I shall remember thee."

High o'er the capital of France,
Beams forth a brilliant moon,
An English colonel steps within
A gorgeous French saloon.
Inside some Gaulish officers
Were chatting o'er the pray
Which left the Allies masters in
Proud Paris streets that day.

Among them there young Purcell sat
A Brevat Brigadier,
Eyeing this British officer -
My God he said "you here."
On Letpsies plains methout I paid
The debt to you I owe.
Remember Mary Purcell now
We'll settle 'ere" We go.

Then and there 'twas soon arranged.
That by the mornings dawn
The living fount of either should
Flow on a neighb'ring lawn.
Dire memories braced young Purcell's nerves
Unerring was his aims
The gallant wrecking Captain fell.
A bullet thro' his brain.

Kickham's Grave.
(Written on the occasion of the second anniversary of his death)

In the valley of Compsey there is a green grave,
Above it the shadows of Slievenamon wave;
A pleasing pall o'er the loved tenant inside,
In the gloom of the mountain, his "darling and pride."

Tipperary stands round it to honour once more
The hero that sleeps there, the pure life that's o'er.
And breathe from his spirit the gushing refrain
Oft roused the dark slave to his manhood again.

The friends of his childhood, companions of youth,
And maidens whose beauty he sang of, and truth,
Who wept for his fate when in prison he lay,
Round his sanctified grave are all gathered today.

And young men who vow that the fetters accurst,
Which shackle their limbs they've determined to burst,
Have come to his shrine that resolve to renew,
And pledge it again, they're loved Kickham, with you.

No altar more meet to lay such vows upon,
No witness more fitting than old Slievenamon;
The music more sweet than the Anner's croon near,
The nurse of his song to his muse ever dear.

While Slievenamon towers, while his loved Anner flows,
While Compsey's green grass on his honoured grave grows,
Shall Kickham be named and his virtues be known,
And ages to come shall each claim him his own.

I Dream Of Thee.

I dream of thee when midnight moons
Are sailing ‘thwart the sky,
And when living things in slumber part,
To me thou’rt ever nigh;
My spirit takes its flight to thee
On Fancy’s blissful wings,
And sweep the cup of happiness
That fond communion brings.

I dream of thee, I think of thee,
At twilight’s early hour,
Are yet the morning sun wakes up
The slumbering dewy flowers;
And when the sun is peeping o’er
The neighbouring eastern hill,
And Nature bids me rise once more,
I’m dreaming of thee still!

Throughout the day, amid the scenes
Wherein my lot is cast,
I feel thy soothing presence still,
Inseparable to last.
Beneath the closing shades of night
I greet the real, and then
I rest my weary limbs once more,
To dream of thee again.

1875

Upon the Crest of Slievenamon.

Upon the crest of Slievenamon
The setting sun was glowing,
A lurid blaze of beauty on
The "Golden Vale" bestowing.
The Autumn flowers were fading away
Their colour growing pale -
But there's a flower no seasons fade,
That blooms in yonder vale.

'Twas such an eve I first beheld
This queen of rural pride,
A charm o'er my senses spread
Thought all in passion wild -
Old Erin's Vallies yet can boast
A theme for Minstrel lays,
No fairer queen of song inspired
The muse of olden days.

O Erin! were thy vallies free
And I'd redeemed my vow,
To her I'd pledge my every thought
I own I love her now;
But dark'ning clouds beset my path
And I must wander on,
In silence I must teach my heart
To live and love alone.

But brigher suns may shortly smiles
On Ireland and on me,
And Mary, when they shed their rays
I'll hie in haste to thee;
I'll loose to thee my bosom's flood
In gurking streams to flow,
Your best shall be to smile on me
Your worst to bid me go.

NFCS 0556: 352-353, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary. Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

Down the Stream of Time.

Give me an hour from busy haunts removed
To muse alone in quiet solitude;
From bustling spheres of toiling man,
Let me withdraw my designs to plan,
Oh, let me listen to the rippling stream
My inner spirit wakening, as if a dream
On my inward vision had cast a spell,
Luring my fancy, bringing me to dwell
With beings of light in some sylvan shade,
Where nature's handiwork at rest is laid.

There, undisturbed let my fancy rove
on aerial wings, to scenes I love,
And thought shall traverse back over time
To days when Erin in vig'rous prime,
Stood proudly forth in all forms of life
In art excelling, in virtue rife;
Designated, as our own history paints,
The "Home of Learning" and the "Isle of Saints."

Let me revel proudly in the gorgeous sight
Picture Erin in fond in colours bright
Her proud defiance to foreign foe
To enhance my colours, enchanting glow;
When Roman eagles dare but look across
Like olden archer o'er castle fosse,
From neighbouring shore at the fierce array
Of Irish valour, holding them at bay,
Defying the flag that ranged the world,
To be o'er her storied green hills unfurled

Oh, let me look on the mighty Brian!
At Clontarf's plains, O vision mine!
When Irish spears were driven through
The iron coats of the pagan crew
Break on my ears the wild hurrah
Which welcomed victory that fair Spring's day -
When Spring again sees such a sowing
My Summer ne'er see their seed agrowing

Of 'tis my duty to paint him dying -
That hoary chief - yet be there no sighing,
In the laps of glory he sank to rest
The star of triumph spangling his breast;
His foes defeated, his country saved,
His parting soul by the blessing laved
Of a ransomed nation, again uprisen
To light of freedom -heir-loom of Heaven

Land of suffering! were thy murdered chiefs
All thus to die, thy people's griefs,
Were not so loud, so deep, so long,
So wailed in story, so caoined in song,
Thy lamentation would not be the moan
That blights thy manhood - that turns to stone.
Thy inner feelings - converts they braves
From manly beings to submissive slaves.

Stay, vision stay! go not yet awhile!
Let this picture over my senses smile,
In travelling downwards enough is seen
To mar the beauty of each sylvan scene.
Strike to my soul the enobling lyre!
Paint for my fancy! grant my muse the fire!
That minstrel honours may bedeck my brow -
But not thy sweetness I sigh for now.

Reserve me that, 'till in some glade
A gentle being I shall serenade,
'Neath soft influence of an Autumn moon,
When her heart is full and not all her own,
The minstrel honours I now would crave,
Is power to waken - make slumbering slave
Feel what he is - be what he ought,
And rise obedient to the passion caught.

But fancy travels - I whirl on
Down the vale of time, and Brian is gone,
Gone is the glory circling his name,
Living only in his deathless fame
What Clontarf saw on that storied day
Uprisen freedom, is passed away.
Deceat and treason in high places lurk
Foul treachery aiding the hellish work.

Again the stranger stands in thy way,
Claims thy scepter, bids thy progress stay,
Again thy sons unsheath the blade,
Again fresh laurels on thy brow are laid,
Blacwater carries many a mangled corse
At Yellow Ford who essayed to cross.

NFCS 0556: 328-336, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

The Hat My Father Wore.

Althro' my veins when youthful blood carous'd with madding fire,
To blue-eyed blonde and gay brunette I ofen strung the lyre,
And sang of Mary, Kate and Jane, of Aileen o'er and o'er,
Now, for a change, my theme shall be – the hat my father wore.

When giving me that relic famed, he bade me care it well,
And ponder on the thrilling tales that old caubeen could tell;
I promised to obey him, but now that he's no more,
A parent's gift, I cherish it – the hat my father wore.

Beside the Slaney's dancing tide 'twas "blocked" in 98;
It sat upon a "croppie's" brow and went through perils great;
It was at Tubberneering when the Irish pikemen tore
Thro' shattered lines of English steel – the hat my father wore.

At Ross and Enniscorty, too, and Arklow 'mongst the rest,
And when the green o'er Gorey flew it stood the fiery test;
From Vinegar Hill, that fatal day, a vanquished hero bore
It safely on thro' Wicklow glens – the hat my father wore.

When mid Tipperary's emerald hill O'Brien led the van,
It was at Ballingarry when the "peelers" nimbly ran;
In Widow Cormack's cabbage-plot it trampled was galore,
Still it regained its ancient shape – the hat my father wore.

And later on when martial strains again aroused the land,
Upon the steeps of Slievenamon it was amongst the band
Who flung the glove in England's face and fore high heaven swore
To crawl no more as crouching slaves – the hat my father wore.

'Tis full of stirring memories, the darling old caubeen,
For in the centre of the fight its plume has ever been;
And in the charging onset, with our flag unfurled before,
"Twill wave for home and freedom yet – the hat my father wore.

The Shan Van Vocht August 7th 1896
UCD Digital Library

A Legend of the Mass Rock.

There is a rugged boulder on the slopes of Slievenamon,
Which in my youthful rambles I have often sat upon;
The summer evening's breezes seemed to gently sigh and moan,
O'er scenes enacted long ago around that old granite stone.

The troubled genius of the rock oft whispered in my ear,
And said: "Young man, 'tis hallowed ground on which you're standing here;
Your forebears oft times knelt before my coarse unpolished face,
Beseeching Heaven's help to aid their persecuted race."

One Christmas morning early, ere the sun peep'd o'er the hill,
Our sainted fathers gathered round, their breathing almost still;
And eagerly they bent their knees upon the heat-clad sod,
Upon this natal day to greet their Saviour and their God.

There stood the vested Sagart with gentle smile for all,
While nought disturbed the silence save a sentry's light foot-fall,
As from the heights above us here he scanned the vale around,
A searching for the "smell-priest" gang who cursed our Irish ground.

The Mass began, in accents mild the holy prayers were said,
At "Domine, non sum dignus" came the scentry's hurried tread;
"Fly, fly !" he cried, " the soldiers come, a traitor leads them on"
A pervert base, who fouled the face of proud old Slievenamon.

With setting brows the men closed round their loved Sagart dear,
"Go, go my sons, with empty hands you have no business here;
Go, go, my sons, heed my advice, and save yourselves I pray,
Leave me to God and Mary kind – I'm in Their hands today."

"'Tis my command," the Sagart cried, "obey it while you can,
Be mine His welcome company – our mighty God made Man,
Who graciously came down today on this rude alter stone,
To comfort you who bear your cross, as He once did, alone."

As nearer came the demon pack with blood-hound-baying roar,
"Seize him alive," the captain cried, "he's worth them all, and more;
To shoot him would no torture be, we'll flog him first, and then,
To what your godly tastes desire, we'll hang him in the glen."

The priest beheld their near approach, and yet he did not fly,
But quietly did the vestments fold and lay them gently by;
He clasp'd the Host unto hi breast and onward nimbly ran,
Closely pursued with haste and hate by the blood-thirsty clan.

The traitor guide call'd loudly: "Men, you need have little fear;
He can't escape, the deep ravine shall stop his progress near;
The foaming torrent's swollen, if to cross it he shall try,

The rocks below shall for us find his body by and by."

Loud roar'd the rushing waters as they came tumbling down,
Just like an Alpine avalanche, from the old mountain brown;
Loud cheer'd the yelling troops behind, exulting with delight,
To witness, as they fondly hoped, their quarry's deadly plight.

"Hurrah, hurrah ! he's on the brink, now press you tightly on !
Ours is a glorious chase today on storied Slievenamon;
Fix bayonets ! lest he should attempt to turn him on the trail,
Take him alive, is my desire – I'll mark the men who fail."

As he approached the deep ravine, pursuers in full view,
Our Sagart raised the sacred Host, and o'er the chasm he flew,
He landed safe at th'other side, and on a large flag stone,
He left the impress of his feet to let the deed be known.

Oh ! who can tell what fury raged amongst the savage hoard,
To see the Sagart safely kneel, while Hoast he there adored;
They fired their ready muskets, but the bolts flew far and wide,
And only tore the heather brown upon the old hill-side.

The Suir.

By storied scenes and honeyed vales
The rippling waters glide,
Of silvery Suir – by Knockmealdown
And Comeragh's towering side.
By fort and keep, and hoary ruin,
Its gushing currents swell,
And proudly in their grandeur lave
The walls of rare Clonmel.

Where Thurles stands, in Ely famed
Beside that ancient town,
Like youthful giant in pristine strength
From "Keeper" rushing down,
The Suir casts off its swaddling clothes
And hurries on to tell,
A piece of Ireland's story 'neath
The walls of rare Clonmel.

Your shades of saints and warriors
Who rest at Holy Cross,
A requiem o'er your silent graves
A dirge upon your loss.
The Suir is crooning evermore,
But nought can break the spell
Which binds it true and faithful to
The walls of rare Clonmel.

'Tis where Athassel's Abbey spells
Another tragic page
In Ireland's chequered history
For savant and for sage;
And then the lordly towers of cahir
Their pens employ as well
The stronghold of Ardfinnan, and
The walls of rare Clonmel.

The Suir will bear them witness for
It lives as when of yore
De Prendergast and Butler held
High revels on its shore;
Old Slievenamon stands sentinel
To prove that fair ones dwell
Within its smiling valleys
And the walls of rare Clonmel.

Roll on you charming river thro'

Tipperary’s vales so green !
You tell us tales in silence of
The times and things you’ve seen
Of Gallowglass and Norman Knight,
Of battles where they fell,
And breaches well defended in
The walls of rare Clonmel.

Charades.

Just thirteen years ago today
(How quickly time rolls on),
I stood upon thy summit first,
Historic Slievenamon!
Oh, what a sight ! Can I forget it?
Tipperary's stalwart sons
Assembled there that day to swear
Their faith in pike and guns.

Where are they now, those valiant men,
Who climbed the hill that day?
Say, where are they, Atlantic's waves?
Cursed English Dungeons, say?
What varied scenes on fortune's stage
Have their parts been among,
Since Nagle raised the emerald flag
That day, on Slievenamon.

Old hill ! you've often heard before,
Men vow to set thee free,
And march with burnished weapon's bright,
In freedoms name on thee.
But can you the contrast forget
Who on your sides that day
Raised freedom's sacred banner first,
They did it first betray?

Tho' even such has been the case,
Enough of truth remains
To raise that glowing emblem still
O'er Erin's hallowed plains.
A traitor among the twelve was found –
The chosen of the Lord.
Let rivals of his infamy
Partake of his reward.

My first in Latin back again,
And minus of the tail,
Take what is sure to warn me
Each Sunday without fail;
Then put them both together, and
You'll find when you have done
What I am now, and have been
That day on Slievenamon.

September 2nd 1876

In the legendary lore of Ireland it is related that a band of Fionn McCumhal's warriors, hunting on Slievenamon, fell under the spells of some Tuatha-de-Danaan women, who put them to sleep in a fairy palace on the eastern shoulder of the mountain, where they must remain until Ireland becomes a free and united nation. In my opinion a spell was cast on our whole people which kept them sleeping in the dark mists of dissension, and paralysed the efforts of statemen, warriors and heores, who have striven to resurrect Ireland through all the ages of their bondage and thrall.

The Sleeping Warriors on Slievenamon.

Amongst the lone rocks on your slopes, Slievenamon,
Are sleeping proud heroes of ages long gone,
Who trampled its brown heather pursuing the chase,
With the clan and dash of a sport-loving race;
They followed the wild boar, the wolf, and the deer,
The bracken their bed and spring water their cheer,
But well lack-a-day! They fell under the ban
Of a Eiren's false charms on old Slievenamon.

They sleep on the mountain in sunshine and cold,
Tho' centuries pass they never grow old:
Relieved from their bondage they never can be
"Till victory's shouts proclaim Irishmen free,
"Till victory's shouts, swelling over the plain,
Awaken the echoes again and again:
Then, then shall be broken the spell once put on
By forces of darkness, oh, proud Slievenamon.

Arise you bold heroes the time is at hand
When you'll shine in new armour, you slumbering band,
The wand is just broken did your senses enthral,
The witches who chained you are getting a fall;
Your country listens, her illusions are past,
The magical vapours are fading out fast,
The magical vapours dissension put on
To quench our endeavours on old Slievenamon.

The bright sun of union is glowing apace
And scattering the mists long enfolding our race;
No more shall De-Dannan or Saxon's sweet smile,
Cast the "apple of discord" 'tween sons of our isle.
The enchantment is over, we see thro' it all,
Our foolish delusions upheld that dark pall,
Which caused our best soldiers to slumber too long,
Ans brighten our labours on old Slievenamon.

The palace has fallen, the fairy myths are o’er,
And warriors sleep there – no, no nevermore,
Up, up and be doing, is our watchword today,
No luring enchantress for ever and aye
Shall cloud the full moon of our recognised might,
Be she dressed as an angle in garments of light,
De-Danaan and Norman and Saxon are gone
And the Celts are awake upon old Slievenamon.

1910

Good Times and Joy be With Them All.

(As if sung by a Tipperary exile, and inscribed to the Tipperary Men's Society in Philladelphia)

Adieu, adieu, old Slievenamon,
And Anner's smiling vale adieu,
Tonight the burden of my song,
My native hills, shall be of you.
My native hills far, far away,
Tipperary men on you I call
To sing the chorus of my lay
Good times and joy be with them all.

Be with them all, be with them all,
Good times and joy be with them all,
From Cloran old to Kyleotlea,
Good times and joy be with them all.

Adieu, adieu to Moyle's green banks,
And to Clashawley's side adieu,
Where often in the Fenian ranks
We trod at eve on the glistening dew;
The exiled bard of Tullamaine,
Those scones I know can well recall,
And he will join in my refrain,
Good times and joy be with them all.

Be with them all, be with them all,
Good times and joy be with them all,
From Slainstown's fort to Donagh's fame,
Good times and joy be with them all.

Adieu, adieu, loved St. Johnstown,
Your shady bowers and your groves, adieu,
And comrades fond who oft strolled down,
A song, a dance, or a hunt in view.
Those days are gone, those good old days,
I close my eyes, and a tear will fall,
And memory peeps with her Rontgen rays,
Good times and joy be with them all.

Be with them all, be with them all,
Good times and joy be with them all.
Old Cashel's Rock and Clonmel's quays,
Good times and joy be with them all.

Adieu, adieu, you hoary ruins,
Where rest my forebears' bodies, adieu;
No more amongst your moss-clad tombs

I'll kneel and pray, dear shades, for you;
But whilst hot life-blood thrills my veins,
In gushing currents great or small,
Your crumbling towers shall wake my strains,
Good times and joy be with them all.

Be with them all, be with them all,
Good times and joy be with them all;
Tipperary's hills and storied plains,
Good times and joy be with them all.

Oh, Hasn’t The Day Felt Long!

The evening stars are shining, love,
The birdies cease their song,
And I am coming, coming, love,
Oh, hasn’t the day felt long !
Oh, hasn’t the day felt long, my love !
Its sunshine brings us cheer
To me; I love the twinkling stars,
They light me to my dear.

The moon just now is peeping, love
A light has rent the clouds,
Her starry watch she’s keeping love,
Above night’s earthly shrouds;
The rivulet is crooning, love,
I hear its mystic song,
And I am coming, coming, love,
Oh, hasn’t the day felt long!

The flowers have closed their petals, love,
All nature sinks to sleep,
The rabbit ventures forth, my love,
And I my promise keep;
It glads my heart to meet thee, love,
To thee it thinks no wrong,
And I am coming, coming, love,
Oh, hasn’t the day felt long!

Then haste thee to thy tryst, my love,
Oh, haste thee, do not stay!
Come forth to cheer the hearth wherein
Thou boldest boundless sway;
Come forth, the stars are shining, love,
The kine in clusters throng,
And I am coming, coming, love,
Oh, hasn’t the day felt long!

Oh, hasn’t the day felt long, my love,
Its sunshine brings no cheer
To me; I love the twinkling stars,
They bring me to my dear.

1892

My Erin of the Balmy Air.

My Erin of the balmy air,
The babbling brooks and valleys rare!
Your freedom's morn is dawning fair,
Her blush is in the skies!
Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
The long-sought hour is coming soon,
Together march before 'tis noon,
Oh, Irishmen arise!

We've wept and pined in bondage long,
Our woes we've told in tale and song,
And suffered many a cruel wrong
From tyranny and lies.
Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
The tyrant's fate is coming soon,
Together march before 'tis noon,
Oh, Irishmen arise!

Our father fell on every hill,
Their graves our every valley fill,
Their blood empurpled every rill,
Their cheer – "The next who dies!"
Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
Their shades still cry "Assemble soon,
And dry our blood in freedom's noon;"
Oh, Irishmen arise!

Be liberty your battle – cry,
Let your resolve be win or die;
If in your winding – sheet you lie,
Be ours no craven sighs!
Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
Unheeded pass the cowardly loon,
And march together night and noon;
Oh, Irishmen arise!

The Shan Van Vocht August 7th 1896
UCD Digital Library

Ninety–Eight

Rise, rise up, Men of Ireland! rise up, the day is near!
Let wrangling schemers stand and pause, your grim resolve to hear:
That Erin was not made for them: that she has sons in you,
Who'll brush aside those sulking slaves, and for her dare to do!

When pike skian were Ireland's choice, when on them dwelt her hopes,
And valiant men bore them aloft upon her mountain slopes,
And bared their naked breasts before the mail'd invaders' blades,
No foreign tyrant ruled in peace o'er Erin's emerald glades.

Then let us show we are not crushed: that we remember still
The men who died in breach and field and dared death's every ill,
When love was treason high and dark and the penalty was life,
To pay it our fathers fought and fell unconquered in the strife.

But smouldering in their ashes yet a vital spark remains,
Which keeps aglow fond freedom's lamp above our blood-soaked plains.
"Then here is to their memory," and let us celebrate
Their holocaust for Ireland in glorious Ninety – Eight.

The Exile.

Exiled from the land of my fathers,
In a far foreign country I roam.
And tho' I was destined to leave thee,
I ne'er shall forget thee -my home;
Nor the village where oft in my childhood
Wild, reckless I gambled & played.
The maiden I courted in boyhood,
And the hawthorn dell where we strayed.

But here as I toil for the stranger,
In forest's primeval alone.
My thoughts wing their way over ocean,
To joys and to times that are flown.
And I see the gay group by the fireside,
The stile at the bend of the road.
And the murmuring brook by the wayside,
Which glides past her peaceful abode.

And fancy as if to deride me,
Again puts her hand into mine.
And I listen the oft-murmured whisper,
"Ah Willie! for ever I'm thine."
When from my day dreamings I waken,
Missouri hard by rolling on;
My lonely heart sad and forsaken,
Bids adieu to you old Slievenamon.

AN EXILE'S FAREWELL.

(Air- "The Meeting of the Waters")

I'm leaving, my darling, the land I love dear;
I fain would not part it, but cannot live here;
The tyrant had breathed a pestilent breeze,
Which drives me, my darling, far over the seas.

I will not forget Erin's valleys of green;
But it pains me to think on the sad, parting scene
When bidding farewell to – perhaps evermore –
The shores of old Ireland, the land I adore.

I'm leaving ,my darling, but hope thrills a vein
In my sorrowing bosom, that we'll meet again;
Should the hope remain constant, my exile 'twill cheer
Through the lone, sunless days far away from my dear;

Should they whisper, my darling, that I will forget,
Amid strange scenes and faces, the loved one I left
At home in old Ireland, ah! don't them believe-
They'll be telling such tales my own love to deceive.

Remember, my darling, the vows you have made-
From memory's tablets do not let them fade;
For I'll win you a home, or in th' effort I'll die,
And utter your name with my last breathed sigh.

Lines.

Respectfully addressed to all who shall assemble at bazaar and concert in aid of evicted tenants of Drangan and Cloneen, to be held at Drangan on the 8th inst.

Dear friends of a cause which for centuries baffled
All arts of the Saxon, the Norman and Dane,
The soldiers who fell in the still raging battle,
Tonight we're assembled to help and maintain.
'Tis old as great Brian, that monarch of story,
On victory's path could no treason disturb;
'Tis bright as the halo – the nimbus of glory-
Cast over its standard by Owen at Benburb.

"Tis holy as him who came forth to defend it,
With crosier and sword – prelate, soldier in one;
Our last canonised saint, yet his blessing doth send it,
On Cashel's old rock still his spirit lives on;
'Tis brave as the pesants at Oulart who served
The ranks of those house burning revelers in blood,
At fames Tuberneering before them unterrored,
At Wexford and Gorey heroically stood.

'Tis pure as the vestal fire, ever kept burning
O'er our Mary's grave in Kildare's holy shrine,
Till the foul breath of sanetity's robber returning,
Polluting the air, quenched its radiance devine.
'Tis firm today as the old faith of out fathers,
And to both we are true as those heroes of old;
The one like the other, but new vigour gathers,
As tyrants their hell born terror unfold.

And tonight we are here to show those who'd enchain us
A stroke given one is a blow struck for all,
That the battle is ours, so Heaven maintain us,
As one we're determined to conquer of fall !

The Red Blood of Ireland Flows in England.
(Rossa's Prison Life)

The German's love their native soil,
The Swiss their mountains bare,
The Italians love their clear blue sky,
The French their valleys fair,
The Lapland's plains and Russia's steppes
Are snowclad dreary wild,
Their hardy sons would not exchange
For climes more fair and mild.

Can France or Spain or Italy
Claim scenery more fair,
Skies more blue or vales more green
Or meads of beauty rare?
Than can be found in Erin's isle,
By nature she is blessed,
Her plains are among her brightest
And in her lap caressed.

Can German, Swiss or Frenchman boast,
A kinder, truer heart?
Than beats within the Irish breast,
Or one more loth to part.
With scenes of old endearment where;
In youthful fancy strayed,
By flowery dell and fairy rath,
The lover and the maid

Then from those scenes of early love,
Why are we forced to go?
O'er the earthly ball neath every climb
Our crimson currents flow.
To parents wives and lovers,
To brothers, sisters too,
And all things else which earth holds dear,
We're forced to bid adieu.

Look! see the cattle grazing,
O'er many a cold heart clone.
Look! see the naked gables,
All standing out alone.
The rosy children once that grouped,
Around those cottage doors,
Are toiling now 'neath sultry suns,
On many foreign shores.

The landlord came in regal state,

By England's troops girt round.
In Law and Order's mocking name,
He levelled to the ground.
Those once fair cosy dwellings,
Where reigned glad joy and mirth.
And they "red blood" poor Ireland flows,
O'er every land on earth.

Slievenamon, A Tale.

Together oft we strayed beside
The Anner's crystal stream,
And built our castles in the air
On base of love's young dream.
Old Slievenamon has memories,
With those in story told,
When freedom's shout echoed around,
In glorious days of old.

When gazing on that storied mount,
My heart thrills with the fire,
That showed the croppy's eager pike,
And lit the peasant's ire.
To deeds of reckless daring when,
"United Boys" marched on,
To guard their homes and maidens fair,
Around old Slievenamon.

Enough" I know that spirit lives,
And flourishes apace,
And hardy sons still tread its sides,
Who'd take their fathers' place.
Begone you burning memories,
Let softer scenes come on,
Pray tell me off my darling's fate
Beloved Slievenamon.

The Anner ripples on as when;
That day down by its side,
You woo'd our gentle Aileen there,
A happy homestead's pride.
And won her guileless heart -
Consenting we smiled on,
"Alas for softer memories,"
Replied old Slievenamon.

“I rear my towering summit still,
Unto the heaven's blue.
Yes, still I hold my head erect,
As when I smiled on you.
But if I could forget my pride,
Telling where Aileen's gone,
With grief my head would stoop instead."
Replied old Slievenamon.

"Our Aileen was a bonny a lass
As ever culled a flower,
Beside the Anner's limpid stream

At evening's closing hour.
If to those burning memories
You wish to say 'Begone.'
Pray ask me not of Aileen."
Replied old Slievenamon.

The landlord said that fleecy herds
More pleased his generous mind.
Then him unto God's likeness made;
To hunt he got inclined.
The edict scarcely issued was,
When Aileen's brother John,
Sent in a leaden Caveat from
my shades," said Slievenamon.

"I clasped him to my bosom – then,
And hid him many a day;
Within my rocky caverns -
Banned outlaw - where he lay.
Poor Aileen pinned beneath the grief,
And calmly she passed on,
From man's humanity to man"
Replied old Slievenamon.

"Thro' the dim vista of the years,
Which o'er my brow have rolled;
Since Tuatha Danann sorcerers,
And Firbolg warriors bold,
Trampled my embattled sides
I've looked in vain to find;
A man, than tyrant landlord,
More cruel to his kind."

What! tho' Prussian charges slaked,
Their thirst in the Loire,
And plundered Gaul's fair valleys,
'Neath the iron hoof of war.
Or even Turkish despot by
The Danube's rushing wave,
May write Base, bloody spoiler' o'er
A tyrant landlord's grave.

Flow on thou storied river!
Flow on into thy bed!
No more beside thy crystal tide
Shall Aileen's voice be heard.
Tower upwards grand old mountain!
No softer scenes shall thee,
Ever picture for thy children,
Till Ireland's hills are free.

Jem of Killenaule.

Deeds of fame and glory swell old Erin's
bardie themes,
Their passions run in numbers full, clear as
her crystal streams:
When I essay to string a lay, the muses on me
call
To chant a stave for hero brave – bold Jem of
Killenaule.

In days gone by that little town threw up the
barricades,
And old Slieveardagh gathered with the green
above their blades,
To risk their lifes in gallant strifes and try
another fall
With tyrants grim who'd strangle them- the
men of Killenaule.

They failed, as brave men often failed – their
faces to the foe,
Tho' vanquished yet they never quilled, nor
trailed their banner low;
When the olden sound echoed around the
foremost to the call
To raise again o'er hill and glen was Jem of
Killenaule.

No place amongst the great ones, he ever
knew or sought,
Where danger waved its fiery wand 'twas there
he ever fought;
No cowardly fear made him lie near or cross
the boundary wall.
In battles front he bore the brunt, did Jem of
Killenaule.

No cause ever died while such as he doth live
to bear it on.
Be they, muse of Erin's glory, the subject of
thy song!
Let tyrants hark for freedom's spark, tho
burn it e'er so small,
Can blaze again in gallant men like Jem of
Killenaule.

1889

On the Death of a Sister.

Thou art gone my sister darling,
To that land beyond the grave
Where men's troubles find a leading
Where no earthly storms rise
As you join in the blessed chorus,
With a pure Angelic voice
Let us think and see thee o'er us
Banish sorrow and rejoice.

There in the tearful valley,
Tis but nature to regret,
Where some loved one leaves the circle
Some fond parent's "darling pet"
These thout wert, dear sister,
But it pleased the Lord of voice,
To take thee to a better land,
To happier climes above.

When it wishes him who thee,
For to call thee home again
'Tis not ours to stay his mandate
'Tis but useless to complain
But we'll cherish thy remembrance
And when life's day is o'er
We'll hasten, glad to pain thee,
To the beauties heavenly shore.

NFCS 0556: 270-271, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary. Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

The Poor Man's Welcome.

One stormy Winter's evening
Being drenched quite wet with rain,
A traveller in a lordly hall,
Did wearily complain : -
"My feet are sore, I've journey'd far
Along a pebley road,
I've come to seek for a night's rest,
To your princely abode.

The Landlord said : -
"For such as you ,
my hall affords no cheer.
The weary worn traveller
Need never enter here ;
Its portals ever open are
To scions of noble blood,
But bit or sup to hungry poor
I never yet have stood.

He journey'd on until he came
To a poor peasant's cot -
A man whom, hard, unceasing toil
Had ever been his lot -
And there the weary traveller,
A warm welcome found -
"Beneath my roof" the 'good man' said,
For you "good cheer" abound.

The "good dame" rose and stirred the fire,
His dripping clothes to dry ;
The children running for a chair,
Each other did out try.
A steaming jug of sweet new milk
For him they did prepare,
And thirst and hunger's cravings
Were replenished then and there.

A such is the compassion
The rich too often show,
To those whose only, only crime
Has been their fault I trow
To build that lordly mansion,
And clear this wide demesne
Ah, many a poor wanderer
Got reason to complain.

But yet, the poor man's cottage door
Is ever open wide,

His hands and heart are ready for
The stranger to provide ;
The mariner off the stormy main,
The beggar of the road,
Shall ever find a shelter 'neath
The roof of his abode.

NFCS 0556: 288-290, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

The Walls of Rare Clonmel.

My darling dwelt by Suir side,
'Mid the green woods of Gurteen,
When I became his happy bride,
And love lit up the scene;
Our days were then a round of joy,
No sorrows on us fell,
'Tis Cromwell's butchers hover'd high
The walls of Rare Clonmel.

My darling left our native vale,
And in O'Neill's proud van,
His plume e'er fluttere'd in the gale,
Where the combat fiercest ran;
'Twas then the tears well'd in my eyes
As, o'er the conflicts swell,
I heard the warning victor cries -
The walls of Rare Clonmel,

'Twas then my tears rolled down with joy,
For my darling's sword was there,
His cheers resounded loud and high,
On the troubled midnight air;
The glens and rocks of Corrigmore
Echoed the groan and yell
Of vanquished Puritans before
The walls of Rare Clonmel.

Alas! the day had come at last,
When the old green flag went down,
The canting hypocrites had pass'd
The barriers of the town,
I searched amongst the heaps of dead,
I know my darling well,
When danger threatened, never fled
The walls of Rare Clonmel.

He died within my fond embrace,
And oh! I did not cry,
But wiped the blood stains off his face,
And kiss'd his glazing eye;
Far dearer was my darling slain,
Than tongue of mine can tell -
His last words were - "Come on! Regain,
The walls of Rare Clonmel."

NFCS 0556: 291-293, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

Gold Seeking.

'Twas a fine October evening,
In the vale where Anner flows,
Autumn's tint was on the leaves-
All fruit except the sloes
Were falling off the binding stem -
The sun had sank to rest
And scarce a babbling ripple stirred
Upon the river's breast.

In that quiet and peaceful valley,
That river glides along,
An old and hoary ruin beside
Where oft the vassal's song,
Bisturbed the evening's stillness when
The rightful lord held sway,
O'er acres broad extending there-
A stranger's claim to-day.

'Tis crumbled and dismantled now,
A place where bogies hide,
Thro' day, the simple peasants believe
Their pranks to play by night,
Should the belated traveller
Be forced to pass the way
Ah Saints, do you not laugh above
To listen to him pray.

This fine October evening there's
A stir around the ruin;
A man is gazing out of there -
Is gone, and coming soon;
The thickening shades of darkness round
Are settling o'er the hill-
Old Slievenamon all else may fall
But thou art standing still.

'Tis deepning into gloomy night
And yet he is not gone,
But watch ! upon the river's bank
Dark figures pass along,
They join the silent watcher and
They hurriedly converse,
They whisper soft and earnestly,
And hurriedly disperse.

Not long have they been vanished, when,
Again they reappear,
With pick and shovels armed and

That vessel - is it beer?
If so, they are not drinking it,
They're shaking it around -
Perhaps they're ghosts of olden saints
Are hallowing the ground.

Within the ruin a light is struck,
The candle's on the wall,
Of coats and hats divested soon
They're working one and all ;
See how they ply the pick and spade
with what a will they work,
No gourmand half so lustily
E'er plied the knife and fork.

Can that be you Bill Hennessy
Asprinkling round the beer :
Shawn Carroll too and you Jack Loyd
Pray what are you doing here !
O must I call you murderers?
Shall judgement waken up
Within this haunted, hoary pile
The victim of your work?

And Bill ! what incantations are
These your muttering round?
Or do you, by these foolish spells,
Intend to bless the ground?
Perhaps it is that you presume
To exorcise the sprites,
Who hold their nightly revels here
In glare of elfin lights.

'Tis none of our imaginings
No foul deed has been done;
No murdered being shall here await
The awful crack of doom;
Nor neither has it entered in
To Bill's wild, foolish fate,
That he could banish airy beings
Who here that sound await.

The moon is rounding o'er the crest
Of proud old Slievenamon,
Dispelling thence the sable plumes
Night's curtains have put on;
Another throng is gathering
Around this storied ruin -
Say who are they? What can they mean?

List and we'll learn soon.

Meanwhile our earnest labourers
Are delving with a will,
They're disappearing thro' the ground -
The beer is shaking still;
Jack Loyd and Johnny Carroll ye
Can handle well the pick -
"Why start ye thus! - unheed these sounds! -
Come, now or never dig."

'Twas thus spoke out Bill Hennessy
Who still kept sprinkling on,
Around the mound of softened earth,
Our of the pewter can;
What still we think a beverage,
Our peasantry call beer,
But, why it should be scattered thus
We don't inform here.

Another sound - another start -
And tolling of a bell,
Jack Lyod and Johnny Carroll fear
A visitor from hell;
But Bill intones his silent spells
And firmly commands:
"Work on my boys, were near it now,
I'll answer his demands.

In through a rude embrasure where
The wind puffed hard and dry,
A sparkling wave of ruddy flame
Shawn Carroll chanced to spy;
'Twas useless Bill's endeavours then
To sooth him in control,
They started panic- stricken and
Tom rushed from out the hole.

Bill did not run - he stood amazed
In wonder at the sight –
To think an imp of darkness could
Command such blazing light;
He shook the pewter measure
Shouting "Satan you keep back,
No evil spirit, as you are,
Dare follow on my track.

But, Satan, little heeding of
Bill's exorcising powers,
Crept through the gaping opening -

Bill's courage nothing lowers:
But of his two companions
There's not a trace or sign
Save pick and shovel lying at
The bottom of the mine.

Fronting still the "evil one"
He backed out of the place,
The magic liquid sprinkling in
Poor Satan's fiery face,
Alas! it is exhausted and
In hopes of future bliss,
He flung the measure swearing -
"D - n me Satan take you this.

He flung the measure swearing and
He dealt a powerful blow,
When Sol woke up the morning bright
Poor Satan was found low;
Beside him was his wave of flame -
A blackened sod of turf,
Near it lay the empty pewter oh,
But it was full enough.

The Doctor had a job next day
To heal the "Evil one,"
Jack Loyd and Johnny Carroll now
With Bill are dead and gone;
Poor Satan roams this valley still,
But vows he'll never more,
Dispel such golden dreams as those
That night he cast ashore

Yes, golden dreams he did dispel
Dreamt three successive nights,
How it was hid and guarded by
three huge and fearful sprites;
But in the pewter measure where
We thought Bill has his beer,
Was holywater taken from
A little chapel near

To lay those fearful monsters and
To banish them away --
As none could see those treasure in
The Holy light of day --
The monster who kept guard there
Was a spirit in the flesh,
Fireproof against all liquids Save
Guinness' stout and fresh.

Rest your soul Bill Hennessy you
Told us many a time,
Of how you fought the "Evil One"
When in your youthful prime,
And vowed that had your comrades stood
Loyally by your side,
You'd vanquish his "dark Majesty,"
And in a carriage ride.

Knowledge! 'fore the wondrous power
Those myths have passed away;
'Tis few will believe that sprites keep watch
O'er hidden things today;
That veil of gloom is rising which
So enveloped our land,
We crept beneath it long and lone
Now let us rise and stand.

1878

NFCS 0556: 294-305, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

An Exile to the Shamrock.

Beside those lordly rivers,
Poor exiles, as we stray,
Come let us toast the emblem of
Poor Ireland far away;
It decks to-day our brothers' hats
O God above! Are we
Who love its triple leaves so well,
No more their sheen to see.

Do we forget the long ago,
When lurid fires of Beal,
On Tara of the Kingly seat,
Gave way to vesper peal;
Do we forget out Irish saints,
The darksome paths they strayed,
Proclaiming the mysterious truth
The "triple leaves" portrayed.

Ranging those untrodden wilds,
Where great Missouri rolls,
We cherish the sacred emblem in
Our inmost hearts and souls;
Alike those saints of olden times
Who trackless deserts trod,
Be ours to bear the banner still
Of country and of God.

Music on the Breeze

There's music on the breeze tonight
Hark, hear you what it sings,
It rustles thro' the orchard trees
And gladsome news it brings.
It tells of sighs it listens to,
It brings new hopes to cheer,
A weary heart suspended
'Tween doubts of hope and fear.

It tells a tale that's welcome to
A breast love-laden sore!
It bids it raise its courage up
And drop so never more.
Ah! Welcome winds that bear such news
Blow often and blow long!
You little know what joy you give
When singing such a song.

You little know how you are sought
To hear you tell the tale,
You say you heard o'er
You lone and flowery vale : -
Why tarries he so long tonight -
Thus ran the news it told -
Ah me! What must the matter be
Or can his love grow cold.

I took him virgin heart
And there gave him a shrine;
I'd sooner it would cease to throw
Than know that his not mine
All, all that earth can shower on me
For him I'd freely part
And happily feel it sure I had
A place within his heart.

NFCS 0556: 350-351, Collector: Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary. Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

An Old Man's Soliloquy.

An old man stood by the gable side
Of a roofless cottage home,
The storm raged and howled around
The wrecked and ruined dome;
"Oh, happy days I spent" he cried
Within these naked walls;
No comfort more than mine e'er smiled
In yonder lordly halls

The grass now grows about the spot,
Where by a mothers knee
I learned to lisp a prayer to God
In youth’s simplicity;
The foreign lordling's fatted kine
Now roam with boundless sway,
Where I and father delved and toiled
Our lives, day after day.

The barn now - oh where is it?
Just forty years ago,
We made its rafters ring with glee -
Ah, then I knew not woe-
When bringing home my wedded wife -
My Mary gra-ma-chree -
Thanks be to God! you are not left
To share my misery.

I had three sons - three darling boys-
Of Celtic type and mould,
They crossed the seas long years ago
To earn and send me gold;
Columba's guns they've carried since
O'er many a bloody plain
They'll not forget their use they say,
'Till they'll come home again.

They'll not forget their use, they say,
‘Till on old Slievenamon,
Their noise shall rouse the sleeping hares
By Anner's banks along;
They tell me 'tis their iron throats
Shall belch the magic wand,
Shall exercise the tyrant makes
Whose breath has ruined the land.

And turning back upon his road-
"God send the day" he cried,
"When I shall see my children three

Upon a green hillside."
The banished Celt his vengeance nursed
Shall take it home and then
He went away, I heard no more,
But stood and prayed, Amen.

NFCS 0556: 337-340, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

St John's Town.

I know a lovely valley,
On it first shines the sun,
There bloom the fairest wild flowers,
The silveriest streamlets run;
When Nature earth's design conceived
This lovely vale she planned,
To rest her noblest works therein-
To lodge her master hand.

When gath'ring clouds, on Autumn eves,
Bespeak approaching night,
Above the charming valley scene,
Sols parting rays unite,
And linger here in mixed embrace,
As if they longed to gaze
For yet awhile upon this vale-
Pastrol beauty's maze.

The storied elfs of legend lore,
A residence have here,
The rabbit and the timid hare,
The lambkin and the steer,
Indulge their playful notions 'mong
The giant primeval trees,
And flowers in wild profusion 'round
Make home of honey bees.

It is Indian Paradise
When view'd off Parson's Hill
Alas! that hardened heart of man
Should cause it any ill
Let yonder crumbling fane speak out
Has not the lighted brand,
Consumed it, tower and belfry,
Applied by spoiler hand.

And you, you roofless homestead,
Come let us hear the tale
You tell, of crimes in later days
Committed in this vale !
How helpless babe and moaning maid
And grandsire stooping low,
Were hurled out thy lowly door
To wander in the snow.

Look o'er this wide expanse of vale!

And nothing meets the eye,
But fleecy herds and lowing kine -
No smoke ascends the sky ;
From cosy sheeling - No, 'tis ruined,
The huge land-grabber came.
And snatched the plot - the life
sustained
Of maid and sire and dame.

Apart from those dire memories,
No vale by storied Rhyme,
Would I compose in beauty with
The Irish one of mine:
Or where beside the schuylkill,
Columbia's grandeurs frown
There is no scene, I do believe,
Excelling St. John's town.

NFCS 0556: 321-324, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

Musings.

How varied are the thoughts that sport,
And play on poet's brain,
And one and other chase away
Like sun-clouds on the plain;
What airy structures there are built!
What citadels are planned,
And destined but to fade away
As figures traced on sand.

Imagination paints for him
A scene of right delight,
Of emerald hill and woodland glade
Where crystal brooklets glide,
Past meadows decked by Flora's self
And peopled by the glow,
Of animating fancy when
An Autumn sun is low.

Then whispers of the playful muse
Vibrate a vocal cord,
And forth the mellow numbers roll
Harmonious word by word;
Ethereal forms flit around,
Untold of beauties gleam,
And future peoples revel in
A crazy poet's dream.

O vision! conjure up a scene
Of some soft southern clime
Where radiance of bright, sparkling eyes
In meteor lustre smile,
To aid my stupid fancy in
Its strivings to portray,
A mien of grace, a seraph's face -
Attendants in array.

From coral reefs, by Indian isles
Her teeth have plundered been;
Her smiles the glow of morning's light
Upon a woodland scene;
Her auburn locks in loose array
Show neck and shoulders white
Like polished marble glistening in
Soft rays of Luna's light.

In song and story Munster Maids
Were famed in days of yore,
For often has the poet's lyre

Been strung to them before;
But now as then, and evermore
The chords of song they thrill,
And wake the dormant, wayward muse
To harp their praises still.

Rest, rest thee from thy savings rest,
Discordant muse of mine!
Let those whose vocal numbers roll
In sweeter song than thine,
Arrange a wreath of poesy,
Cull'd in some happy hours,
To crown her loveliest of the fair
Who bless this isle of ours.

Before the Battle Time '98

(As Lord Mountmorris's yeomen were returning, after a night of rapine and murder, they were met at their master's park gate and slaughtered to a man.)

The sun is set, 'twill rise again
O'er valley, plain, and wood,
But ere another day is in
Our flag of green and gold
Shall flutter o'er our Irish hills,
Begirt by weapons bright,
We've hid from traitor eyes awhile,
But now we'll show them light.

Is that a star? Does God smile down,
And show us 'long the road?
His holy eye is watching, and
He hates the slavish toad ;
The blaze is shining o'er the hill
Our courage to renew ;
To-morrow Forth and Shelmalier
Shall gather at Carnew.

The hill is reached! Oh, God above!
The star that lit our way
To the humble church where oft we knelt,
When Sunday came, to pray ;
And Father Murphy's shieling is
A heap of burned duet,
Come on, come on who lags behind
Now let him be accurst !

Behold that path of fire and flame!
The bloody yoes are out.
Shall they come back? By Heavens, no!
Nor tell what they're about,
Hell gapes to-night to claim its own
Their feet are on the brink ;
We'll satiate its jaws with joy,
Let no man pause nor think.

On, on they come like demons wild,
Athirst for human gore,
Hell's legions chuckle round them,
knowing
Their mad career is o'er ;
The burned fane, the outraged maid,
The murdered matron's cry,
The ‘venging angel gathered to
That Throne beyond the sky.

On, on, they ride, the land is theirs -
Who dare dispute their sway -
"Devils! What clowns have felled those trees?
The clods shall rue the day ;
We'll scurge and burn, hang and - oh"!
A volley drowns their oaths,
While gleaming pikes and swords and scythes
Are grappling at their throats

Next morning over Wexford hills
The joyful tidings spread
The bloody imps at Camolin
Are numbered with the dead;
The victor flag on high,
Its stainless folds of green and gold
Unfurled to the sky.

(Camolin Park, Lord Mountmorris's seat)

NFCS 0556: 312-314, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

Recollections

The Summer is waning
The Autumn is come:
The roses are fading,
Their beauty is gone.
In "Ocean of Time" just
A year and a day,
One sunk in its depth since
I wandered this way.

What changes a year and
A day bring about!
What old friends departed!
What new ones made out!
What faces familiar!
What voices most dear,
Are vanished and husked;
In the span of a year!

Yet, natures glad face
Bears the same happy glow,
The flowers spring and fade,
And the rivulets flow.
On, On and for ever
They tread the same paths,
And hum the old tunes
Blown by meadows and raths.

I bless thee dear season
That ripens the earth,
Maturer of Nature!
In me you gave birth.
To feelings that budded
In cold Winter drear,
And grew thro' all seasons
Of this happy year.

'Mong thy drooping roses,
I spied a flower,
That bloomed when thy sank
'Neath they withering power;
And oh! What a change!
Ere this year was well grown,
That flower I so valued
Became all my own.

Oh year coming on!
Bear me joy like the past,
I ask thee no more than

The present to last.
Its glad favours crown with
Thy circle of time,
And bless the fond hopes
Gushing now in their prime.

NFCS 0556: 306-308, Collector: Teresa Walshe, Convent of Mercy, Drangan, County Tipperary.
Teacher: An tSr. M. Gráinne

Emma's Love.
(The Old, Old Story)

Part The First

CLOUDS

"Give me a hero and I'll tell a tale,"
Not of quiet love in a rural vale,
Where Cupid signs each ardent vow
By milkmaids given beside the plough,
To rustic swain whose horney palm
Grasp her soft hand, nor knew no balm
To him more soothing after hours of toil
Than her loving glance and her truthful smile.

Not of ancient knights shall my story be,
Nor perilous dangers by land or sea;
Nor shall I sing the fierce alarm,
When "gods of war" in rude glory swarm,
With "pride and passion" motive power of kings
Riding the tempest their designing brings,
Scattering ruin in their fiery trains,
Debasing nature in what remains.

Nor shall I sing the upheaving shock
Of a people's vengeance, bursting the rock
Of corroding tyranny, galling their veins,
Their lifeblood rusting the binding chains:
Their name a byword through the paths of earth,
Scarcely knowing they their place of birth,
So soon they're doomed for to wonder o'er
The world's highways, to rest no more.

Tho' it shall be every poet's theme
To rouse the people their rights to gain;
When his mellow numbers harmonious roll
He should devote them to fire the soul
Of slumbering slave who shuts hie eyes
To the abject state – who would despise
The inward whisper that must ever be,
Telling his conscience – "God made thee free."

'Tis thus I'd love to woo the muse,
In every slave I would this infuse –
To God alone belongs regal power,
And to each man He gives a dower
Of freedom's bounty, when He stamps His whole
Image and likeness upon his soul.
I must dispense in my present story
With patriot honors, laurel-crown'd or gory;

Did I chose a hero ‘mongst that noble band,
I need not travel from this hapless land;
I need not wonder by Lucerne’s lake,
Nor to Inspruck’s chapel my choice to make,
But so profuse do their virtues glow,
How best to chose one I’d scarcely know.
I’d ask a hero – do you deem it strange!
When I have said that I need not range.

From Erin’s vales and green-clad hills
To find him one, whose bosom thrills
With every feeling that enobles man,
But noble feelings suit not this my plan
In the part which I now relate –
Not of quiet love bear in mind I state.
In an Irish valley dwelt a lady fair,
With heart as free as yon mountain air;

Lights were her cares, no troubles pressed
The calm repose of her gentle breast;
“Till love stole in and disturbed the peace
That sat enthroned there in sober ease –
Then gayer bloomed the summer flowers,
And brighter glistened the vernal showers.
That time all nature blooming shone,
Love closed her eyes, their light was gone,

Or dead to all but the glowing side;
Nor could she see even the gulf so wide
Before her yawning, onward she strode,
Nor looked around her to view the road:
She travelled madly – oh, all seemed fair,
The vale of Eden and no serpent there!
In the fond belief of her trusting heart,
No doubt dare whisper, no thought dare start,

To mar the sweetness that smiled around
Her hallowed steps on enchanted ground;
In fairyland her whole fancy dwelt,
Bestowing her heart not a pang she felt,
But freely gave it, nor made sure to know
Whether ‘twas admitted where she bade go.
O’er – credulous fair one! obscured by truth,
Of your own heart in its warm youth,

You longed to lay it at rest secure,
To dream of falsehood it was too pure.
But, oh, the frailty of fickle men!
Tho' yours today, he, tomorrow can
Swear to another, "I never knew
One I could fancy, my dear but you."
Soon pleasure vanished, on her vision stole.
A ghastly phantom that racked her soul;

Blind, sporting Cupid drew back the veil,
And jealous reason – apt in love to feel
The veriest slight – lent its subtle aid
To torment the thoughts of this gentle maid;
She hoped and hoped, as but true love can,
Nor would she deem him a false – hearted man !
What others pined for was his he knew,
(Ah, world's ways! Who can see ye through);

Yet, he set aside him the earthy part
A god would wish for, a loving heart;
I cannot praise him, I won't dispraise,
See what he spurned and despise hi ways!
What often lit through the world's gloom,
Great men to honour, he did it doom,
To waste its sweetness – and, oh, how sweet!
For a better world than ours 'tis meet:

Could fancy travel beyond realms of air,
Naught more lovely could delights it there;
Its trust ever lightens the weary load
Of labour's burdens, make short the road,
To beings toil-worn, when sure that rest
Awaits them fondly on loving breast.
Oh, could I paint him who thus despise
The ardent glance of true woman's eyes!

Or could I teach her for to forget
Her faith and love and her vain regret!
No glowing nimbus would o'er him gleam,
Nor waking visions would ever deem,
Or dare to trouble the endearing tide.
That leaves her bosom – oh, love how wide,-
Thy channels open, when bright the streams,
That play around thro' the midnight hour;

Of her who rests 'neath thy trancing power.
But when she learns her hopes are lost,
What teasing phantoms wild, weir'd and tossed,
Beset her rest and bemock her fate,
'Till love, scarce throwing, she calls his hate.

Days, months rolled ever and swelled to years,
Yet naught transpired to allay her fears,
Save, now and then, a truant ray,

Luring a while, then fleeing away,
And leaving after a darksome trace
Not easily seen, yet growing space.
Pray, ladies, listen, and hope that you
Tho' loving less may be loved more true!
Tho' loving less! But to one 'tis given
In half an age, this gift of Heaven!

If earthly moulded it would not stand
So sweet, sublime, defiant, grand,
Look not here for its counterpart,
"Twas by Him given who moulds the heart.
His own was first, then it may bestow
What's left by Heaven on earth below.
What's left by Heaven! Judge you who can
Its loving compose, when on bears man.

So large the bounty 'twas hers to pour
Like dew in summer, helping the store
Of earth's produce, but alas ! it fell
To a husbandman who not cared it well,
Nor seemed to feel nor wish to learn
What world's wealth is too poor to earn.

Child of the gods! If thou are blind
How dost thou ever close the purest mind.

To indulge thy revels? Thou wayward self,
Canst thou never find one whose God is self ?
Does instinct lead thee, thou mischievous minx,
To play thy pranks on a heart that sinks
Not to sordid feelings? I think thou knowest
The where to settle, the' blind thou goest !

But when thy fancy leads thee to steal
The "tender passion" from breasts that feel.

So very keenly thy piercing lance,
Why not ensure it, nor trust to chance
A place to rest on in safe repose,
Where pass unheeded every wind that blows
Surcharged with doubt or evil story,
Enough to change raven locks to huary.
Didst thou act thus, I'm sure that she,
Our heroine, would not blame thee,

Nor lament the errand bronght thee her way
Oh, never name such mad frolic play !
Play! dost thou call it – to sear the bloom
Of budding flowers – to shrowd in gloom
The swelling breeze that buey'd the hope
Of a gentle barque on the sea of love;
Stormtossed you left it in the gulf of doubt,
Nor marked the channel to steer it out;

Blow fairer winds ! and fill her sails
"Till safely anchored where no such gales
Shall ever threaten our voyage more
Should Cupid lure her to leave the shore,
And tempt again the stormy wave
Most mortals sail on, and all oft crave
A passage over to some strange
Thy know not of: while some in sport.

Step lightly in, but the morrow's sun
Oft brings them pain of the evening's fun.
Without our hero we must remain,
Fancy his part and you'll spare me pain;
I'd fail to picture for people's eyes
A man regardless of such a prize.

Emma's Love

Part The Second

SUNSHINE

Oh love! True love! 'tis true thy course
Runs never smoothly, thou art the source
Of much annoyance, when thy subtle dart
Explores the regions of a trusting heart.
Unchains thy moorings, sets it afloat
In search of refuge. 'Tis false I wrote
That truth gets truth, save from above
Earth's pleasures pale 'fore requited love.

For "Ladye fair" have spurs been set
And shining lance sought the stirrup – rest,
While she, perhaps, on some drawing – room knight
Bestows the trophies won in the fight;
And yet, again, while some languid one,
Mourns his absence now twelve months gone,
He fits around like the butterflies
Some dazzling lights and there expires.

But ere he dies singes his wings
"Till late he sees what luring things
Bedazed his vision, like "Dead sea fruit"
When touched dissolves, then in pursuit
Of other charms to compensate his loss.
The sweets steal by while he sips the dross,
Ans on and on from bad to worse he goes,
And calls it fate that actuates his woes.

Unhappy man! I won't call thee worse,
Thou to thyself are the direst curse
That can befall thee, when thou hasn't turned
Aside thee favours a God ne'er spurned.
Search earth for comforts, you'll find in love
Most soothing balm under Heaven above,
"Tis a priceless ornament adoring man,
To wear a richer no woman can.

When Adam rose from that favoured sleep
Which once begot him his companion Eve,
And saw her by him his soul was filled
With the "withehing passion" – no troubles stilled
Its sweet vidration and evermore
Twas all of Heaven in his fall he bore.
It settled on him before he fell
Not being of earth can't be touched by hell.

And thou loved Emma – she clutched the guage
That lost our portion once in an age,
And held the half for herself alone,
Her troubles now, she can find her none
Who grasped so fully of the scanty share
Heaven affords unto earth to spare –
She then bethought of a foolish plan,
And this is how her mad project ran:

To share with someone the swelling tide
That laved her bosem and thus provide
A fitting chamber her love to rest –
Ah me! How gorgeous the couch was dressed –
Scoffers ! see it with her love-lit eyes
And keep your feelings if no blushes rise!
I do not envy the callous glare
Of those who move not while gazing there.

Then stay your foolish remarks! oh stay!
When to her' Emma, darling Em', you stay –
"What have you seen that you mourn him so,
Regret him not but let him go;
He was not worthy of the slightest glance
Of thy pure love, sweet to entrance
An Abelard – never Eloise
In love's vain love's vain longings disturbed by her peace.

With fonder yearnings, when round her playing
On wings of fancy, lest thoughts were straying
Bearing an image so love'd now lost –
Oh, sweet the picture were it not crossed
With gloomy traces of a saddening present
Which stayed her prayers in their Godward ascent;
She sank suspended 'tween hopes and fears,
Her days were months and her months were years.

How bright the charms of each sylvan scene,
The bounding hills and the vales between!
No winter clothes them in his arid shroud,
When love's the mirror that paints them out!
All forms see thro' that magic glass
Are robed in beauty; but, yet, alas!
Too late we find all is not gold
That glitters brightly – 'tis a maxim old.

Come time and give us thy healing balm!
‘Tis thou canst all such wild tempests calm!
Bring back the light to the tear dimmed eye;
Bring the merry laugh to replace the sigh.
Foolish votaries of Cupid’s flame!
There’s as good to come as ever came –
Cheer up thy spirits, be advised by me,
Forget the man who’d love not thee.

You’ll find him yet – one who will bestow
All you can crave for of love below.
‘Tis not decreed that such tender care
Should “waste its sweetness on desert air.”
Care well thy heart and never find
A passing fancy on every mind.
Don’t follow wealth, it does not excel,
The simple rustic can love as well,

If pure the founts that lave the breast
There thou hast found fitting place of rest.
We found a hero – he came at last,
Her cares and troubles and woes are passed;
Heaven crowned her faith and heard her vow,
The pain of waiting is over now.
Forgotten now are the vigils long,
No more shall rumour dare whisper “Wrong.”

The world tossed him, and to his care
He wouldn’t draw one he loved so dear.
We blamed him much for the hardened part
He too in teasing so true a heart;
But she forgives him and so shall we,
We know his story and find that he
Took honour’s part, tho’ it hurt him sore
It knaw’d his vitals and pierced his core.

Conceive his state, pray, you who can,
Ans call him no a false-hearted man.
He never believed fate had decreed
To win such love he could succed.
On the gilded throng was his wont to gaze –
The glittering scenes of the world’s stage –
A thought would whisper in sadness lone,
Behind the curtains poor me’s unknown;

‘Tis but the power of acting skill
That first seduced, then enslaved, my will.
Hope lent me once a transient ray,

Thought stept in and it flew away.
But still fancy haunts my troubled mind.
I hear a whisper on the sighing wind –
“Behind these curtains thou’rt not unknown,
Thine’s a picture on the vision’s lone
Of one who told thee – I’ll ne’er regret
The time, the hour, and the place we met,
Unless that you should spurn my love,”
And a sigh escapes him - “Poor injured dove,
I’ll rise and show thee I’m contented still.”
Thought comes again and thwarts his will.

At length he rose o’er that mocking power,
And mourns him not the eventful hour
That bade him go and possess the heart
Whose lament was ever – Why should we part?
But she was true, and truth is blest,
If it oft disturbed her, it gives her rest.

So ending my story – Thus Emma’s love,
Which stood she tempest of talk to move,
Is now repaid for its steady truth,
Naraed in age tho’ begot in youth;
Among the few of the sex she stands
Whose hearts invite them to give their hands,
Gentle reader ! ask yourself would you,
If treated so, remain so true?

The End

In Gallant Tip.

You Muses nine, your ear incline with heart
and right goodwill,
Whilst I implore your aid once more the sport-
lyre to fill,
In praises of that dashing band whose equal
can't be found,
Who hunt the hills of Gallant Tip., the pride of
Ireland round !

The "Master" bold like Fionn of old, aye,
reveals in the chase,
When warning "whoop" excites the troop,
and each one takes his place,
As music of his "beauties' rare, swell on the
Crispy breeze-
And many a Nimrod's safe return depends on
Hands and knees.

By banks and breaks sly Reynard takes his
artful course along,
From Garranacole to Mullinahone, thro' fences
weak and strong;
The bugle notes are ringing wild, while panting
steeds draw breath,
By Ballydonnell's limekilns as the quarry runs
to death.

Our Gallant New Brigade.

My love is gone away to France,
And I feel all alone;
Tho' but in dreams his face I see
I'll sing no sad ochone;
And lonesome are the meadows now,
Thro' which we often stray'd,
Since he became a soilder in
Our gallant New Brigade.

When Ireland call'd he answered her
His was no idle show
To fight the foes of liberty
I proudly let him go
To guard the shrines of Erin,
And protect each wife and maid,
He's now an Irish Soldier in
Our gallant New Brigade.

The plains of France and Flanders his
Ancestors trod before,
And carved a page in hstory
Empurpl'd by their gore;
Now to maintain their hard-won fame
My love is not afraid
My dashing Irish soldier in
Our gallant New Brigade.

Long centuries have pass'd since then
Long years of misery
Old Ireland's sons are ready still:
To fight for liberty;
In either France or Flanders, or
Wherever 'tis betrayed,
You'll find the Irish Soldier of
Our gallant New Brigade.

I've just received a letter, saying
My love is wounded sore;
He feels, he states, he'll hardly see
His home and me no more;
So as a Red Cross sister now,
In their honour'd garb arrayed,
I'm going to nurse the soldiers of
Our gallant New Brigade.

January 1915

This poem is taken from Thomas Ryan's short story from "Philip O'Dwyer" also called "The Schoolmaster Abroad" written about 1892. As he does not credit this song/poem to another author (which he usually does) I believe it is by Ryan himself as it is written in his style. The song is written to the air of:
Aileen Mavourneen.

My Cushla Machree.

She told me she loved me,
I questioned its truth,
I believed it to be
The Soft impulse of youth;
I looked in her face, and
I saw in its glow
A picture which sought
But the soul can bestow.

I lingered a-near her,
And constant she seemed,
Till at our each meeting
New hoped on me beamed;
The soul that illumined
The glow of her face
Shone bright thro' her eyes,
With the pride of her race:

With a pride that's too noble
To stoop to deceit,
With a spirit too proud
This vain world to greet.
The vows she has plighted
She kept them for me
Is a nook of her heart,
Where no *boddagh* may see.

Let the snow crown the plains,
And encap the old hills
Of my dear, native Island,
I feel not its ills;
While such true devotion
And fond love are mine,
In mist of black water
Bright Suns on me shine.

Let winds loudly rattle,
And swell the fierce tide
Of oceans, whose names
Doth this Island divide
From lands golden laden,
They've no charms for me,
My gold is my love of
My *cushla machree !*

HALLOWEEN

By

A Drangan Boy.

"Yes! let the rich deride, the poor disdain,
These simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art."
- Goldsmith

" Old Ireland of the streams! " of the fairy, ghost and phooka where are the native charms your immortal Goldy sung of? If of hill and glade, and dell and mead they still remain; but if the native charms which characterised the merry makings and reunions of the peerless sons and daughters, ah me! much has passed away I fear, never to return. Thy flowery May eves are no longer heralded in by the song and dance on the village green, the garland-crowned May queen is forgotten, except in the retrospections of hoary-headed sire and dame, and in those alone she lives. And why? Echo answers why? When the green robes of summer has passed away, and the discarded foliage of the grove is whirling around on the blast, Irish mirth and music met again in honoured festival to celebrate the event.

Allhallowe'en was a joyous gathering-time in the days of our fathers. "Dad and mam and lad and lass" used congregate around the hospitable hearths of the cosy farmsteads in their turn as the years went round. The storm may rave and howl outside, but the harvest's produce was safely stocked and secure in the sheltered farmyard. The year's harvest toil was over, and its reward and result being gathered together and out of harm's way, lightened the peasant's hearts and showered down on them all they sighed for. The blind piper sat in the chimney corner, while the floor resounded with the tap, tap of lithesome feet timing his melodious notes. The nut-burners, lead-melters, the apple divers all pursued their favourite games around, enlivened now and again by a steaming jorum of the " rale ould mountain dew ", never spoiled by the blink of a gauger's eyes.

But a change came and Hallowe'en is now ranked amongst the happy times of the past. And why? No more at that happy season were seen the cosy farmsteads encircled by the wall thatched produce of the preceding year. All, all had found its way into the insatiable maw of landlordism. The hollow murmurs of Winter were breaking ominously on the wretched wars of people whose all had been ruthlessly torn from them, leaving them empty handed to confront the grim spectre of starvation conjured by the witches of tyranny to complete the subjugation and extirpation of the Celt. So well did the witches' policy succeed that all of the bone and sinew capable of preserving itself from the fatal ravages of famine was flying the land, almost afraid to look behind lest the ground had become accursed and the fate of " Lot's wife " would overtake it. Need we pursue further for sufficient to account for the eclipse of that jollity which characterised those red-letter days in the early cycles of our fathers time? No. We need not wonder that they have been forgotten by almost all but the romanticist and poet, and if in our humble way we can contribute our quota towards keeping their memories alive till the day shall come again " when the peasant, lord of the soil he tills" shall be in a position to bid defiance to the gaping maw of landlordism and entertain, without fear or trembling his friends on Allhallowe'en once more, we shall feel satisfied.

" Around the blazing hearths tonight,
Are many a girl and boy
Assembled, the time-honoured spells
of Hallowe'en to try;
And Irish mirth and humour
Swell around each social group,
And tales of witch and fairy and
The ever-dreaded phook

The molten lead may hiss and foam,
And form fantastic shapes -
Young Mary's fancy pictures Mike
In every line it takes;
While Judy's heart tells her 'tis Ned -
Her own dear darling boy -
And sternly would she have said so,
But she's a leetle shy.

Bring up the nuts, the bars are clean
Place Tom and Biddy here;
She jumps about - she's not content;
There is a ringing cheer -
At Tom's expense the joke goes round -
Ho! Maggie that will do
Look, here you are, and try yourself,
You're standing lonely too!

The cakes are sliced - there is a hush -
Ha! Johnny found the ring,
And ere another Hallowe'en
To th'altar he shall bring
A blushing lass to wear it, and
His better half to be;

Beware thee, Johnnie that she proves
A better half to thee?

Give silence to old Jim, my lads -
See, Katy, stop that laughing!
What harm if to reach the point,
Poor Bill is water quaffing
Leave off that nudging over there,
And listen to the story
Of youthful freak in olden days
From yonder grandad hoary.
'Twas just a Hallowe'en like this
And long since was the time "
Quoth Jim " when raven were my locks,
And buoyant was my prime;

I was a harem-scarem,
Never dreading aught of harm -
To court my lass or drink my glass,
I never burked a charm.

To span the haystack I repaired
To neighbour Jackson's haggard,
Believe me, boys whene'er I thought
On Nell I was no lag ard.
The spell had taught me to believe
That in the third embrace,
I'd clasp the form of Nelly, and
Look in her purty face.

I quickly spanned the haystack,
But ere the second round,
I fell upon a donkey that
Lay resting on the ground;
The donkey bray'd - I loudly bawl'd
" Oh, Nelly can it be
Your'e merry laughter has so changed -
Ain't I your own Jimmie?

The donkey used his hinder feet -
Cried I Oh, Nelly, dear!
What do you mean, or are you mad?
Tis Jimmy that is here!'
She shoved me through the haggard gate -
I bounded o'er the plain,
And vow'd to court my Nelly that
I'd never span stack again.

The fun is growing uproarious -
Poor Bill has got a damping,
In vain to reach the apple he
Is neck and shouders swamping
Say, Mary, stop that pinching and
Faith, Judy, that's a glance
Would soften adamantine rock
Or blunt a pointed lance.

And song and joke and tale go round -
Oh, Irish hearts are light!
Where is the land whose daughters boast
A purer record bright?
As proudly as her pillar towers,
He slandered sons uphold
The fame that garlanded the wreath
Placed o'er her brow of old.

Surely in the heat and struggle and crush and worry of the trying times around us, it is refreshing to take our minds back to the merry past and dwell if only for an hour, on scenes and times and men whose records give us an insight of the buoyant nature of the Celtic heart. We will find in those records that although " wild war's deadly blast " had hardly ceased to blow for seven hundred years over the blood-be-dewed plains of Ireland, it was unable to check the exuberant, with their new inventions of conquest, tore up the peasant homes of the land. Then and not till then was the fountain of that free and joyous spirit tapped and its pulses stilled never to throb in olden glory again until it shall be made impossible to tear up our homes evermore - a consummation near at hand - and then our pleasant Hallowe'ens again.

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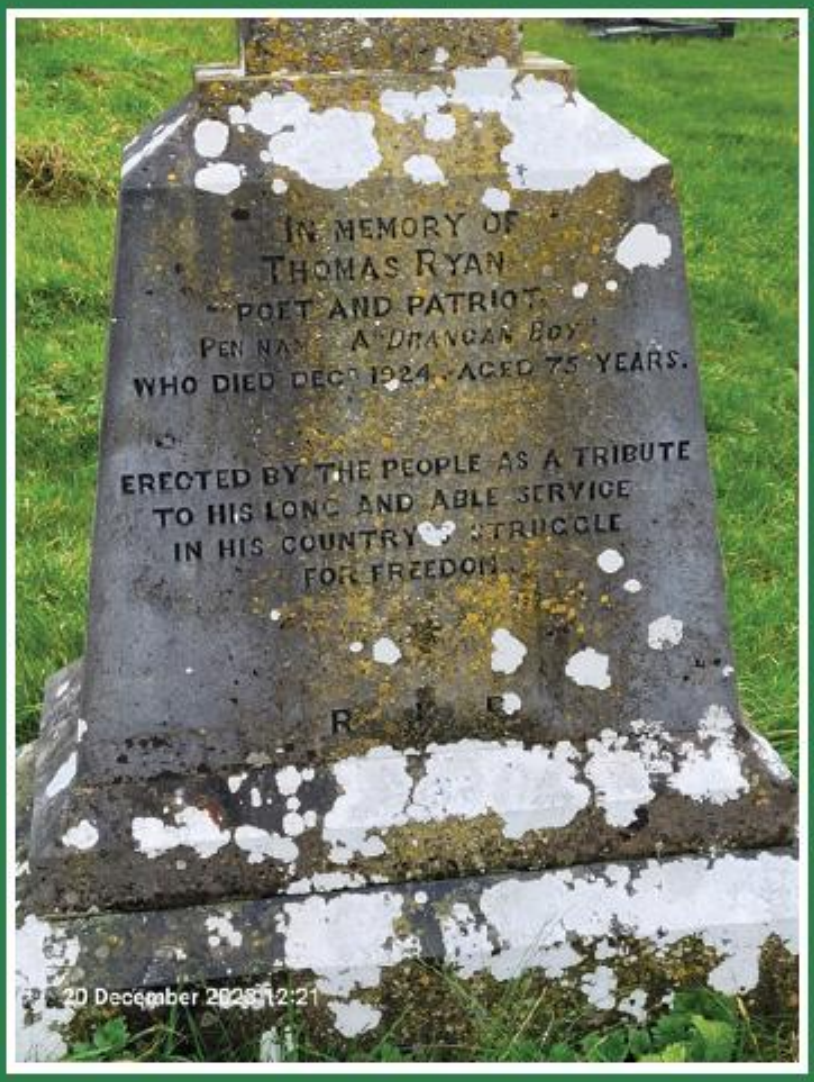
IN MEMORY OF
THOMAS RYAN
POET AND PATRIOT
PEN NAME A DRANGAN BOY
WHO DIED DEC 1924 AGED 75 YEARS.
ERECTED BY THE PEOPLE AS A TRIBUTE
TO HIS LONG AND ABLE SERVICE
IN HIS COUNTRY'S STRUGGLE
FOR FREEDOM
20 December 2023 12:21

"...it would be ungrateful of his native county, and more especially his native parish, if his memory were allowed to die amongst the people whom he served so ably and so devotedly. His abilities were of a high order as his writings amply testify, and from his earliest boyhood he devoted his talents and energies to the uplifting of his country.

Each phase of the national struggle had his support in turn. In the dark days of '67 when the gun seemed the only hope of a downtrodden people, young Ryan took a leading part in that ill-fated movement. In after years when other counsels prevailed and the constitutional struggle of the Land League was initiated, he in conjunction with his distinguished compatriot and fellow townsman, Michael Cusack, rendered invaluable service in carrying on the spadework of that great movement, which ended so successfully in the overthrow of landlordism and the establishment of a peasant proprietary. At a later period when the labourer stood up to assert his right to at least a home and plot of land in his native country, Thomas Ryan was again in the forefront of the fight and a tower of strength to the cause was the voice and pen of " a Drangan boy." By means of literary tastes he will be perhaps best remembered by his numerous writings, all bearing the stamp of the poet and patriot. ..."

The Thomas Ryan Memorial Committee April 1925.

Fitzpatrick Printers, Tipperary 062-51113